

Spinning the child:

How records made for children
construct childhood



Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy
by Liam Alan Maloy

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Abstract

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This study examines records that have been made for children and the role they play in the construction of particular discourses of childhood. Firstly, I attempt to define the category of children's music through reference to texts, audiences and the wider industry. I examine how such definitions have changed over time. Secondly, I assess the role of the adults in the production of children's records and attempt to answer questions about the dissemination of ideology. How do children's records indicate how adults perceive children, what they want them to know, to understand, how they want them to behave, and what they want them to become? What are the dominant ideologies being communicated? What role does nostalgia play in the choices adults make in creating records for children?

My investigation aims to redress the neglect of the academy by examining a range of case studies to reveal how specific children's records reflect and construct specific childhoods in different social, historical and geographical contexts. As such, I provide analyses of a variety of discourses of childhood, and theoretical concepts before examining societal attitudes to children in contingent synchronic settings. I employ a structuralist approach to reveal the stability and endurance of specific ideologies of childhood, and to investigate the competing and often contradictory ways in which these have manifested themselves in specific examples of children's music. The study 'listens in' on childhood and examines the conversations that adults have conducted with children through musical artefacts over the years.

Through the use of a Children's Music Quotient, I analyse the degree of 'childness' (Hollidale, 1997) of individual texts. Ideas of implied readership, agency and competence are employed to assess the impact of a range of texts on audiences with a range of childness. The study reveals how changes in children's music map changes in discourses of childhood through the decades. Specifically, folk music of the 1940s and 1950s served to foster the child as a member of a community, and a citizen with wider social responsibilities. The intergenerational appeal of the music of BBC's *Children's Choice* in the 1950s and 1960s frames children as family members consuming partially-age-differentiated musical products at home. Records of the 1970s and 1980s from TV shows such as *Sesame Street* and *Bagpuss* serve to partially individuate the child as a viewer through the production of age-differentiated products. Children's records of the 1990s from *The Wiggles*, *Hannah Montana* and tween produce increasingly-individuated consumers of transmedial products. By the early 2000s, *Kidz Bop* and *Pop Jr.* related to the child as a consumer with rights and an identity driven by consumption. A study of music from the 2010s reveals the child as a consumer-producer framed in an intergenerational infantilised society.

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Chapter One

Introduction: '*It's time to play the music ...*'

Once upon a time, not so long ago, everyone seemed to be singing to me, or about me. Records made for children or even by children seemed to be everywhere. On *Top of the Pops*, Clive Dunn sang about his childhood, or maybe his grandad's; on *Cheggers Plays Pop*, Madness sang about their school days; on the radio show *Children's Choice*, Terry Scott, Allan Sherman, and Tommy Cooper were singing as if they were children, about naughty little brothers, dysfunctional summer camps and suicidal fathers, whilst on *Play School* and *Play Away*, the songs of Julia Donaldson and Derek Griffiths were encouraging me to pull a funny face, and touch my heads, shoulders, knees and toes. Every week on the Top 40 it seemed that children had made records about how much they loved their grandmas or their mummies, usually in a musical style that felt like it was designed for my young ears. Some children even had their own TV show pretending to be the pop stars of the day whilst others appealed to me in song to 'just say no'. The ancient-sounding songs of *Bagpuss* seared themselves into my memory whilst The Muppets sang songs about women with tattoos, saving time in a bottle, and sitting halfway down the stairs. Rolf Harris and Jimmy Savile hosted prime time Saturday night TV shows that featured music, children, and music for children, whilst the films of Disney, ITV's *A handful of songs*, and a pile of my dad's rock'n'roll singles fleshed out the soundtrack to my childhood. The music I heard not only amused and entertained me, but told me something about the wider world, about other cultures and other lives, about what my parents listened to when they were children, and about other childhoods. Even as a youngster, I realised that the child singers of 'Long haired lover from Liverpool', 'Grandma, we love you' or 'Just say no' probably did not write the songs they were singing, or even agreed with the sentiment, so, I quickly understood that the music that was being made just for me, *my* music, broadcast on shows that were targeted at people *just like me* told me more about adults than it did about children. As I grew up and became nostalgic for the music of my childhood, I had questions about what I had heard and seen. My answers to those questions form the chapters of this thesis.

Records¹ made for children have existed since the earliest days of recording technology. They have been at the forefront of technological advances in cover art (Bonner, D. 2008, p. 56), recording formats and playback devices. The sale of these records has kept 'adult' artists and record companies afloat. They have been interpreted and misinterpreted, censored, banned and aroused moral panics. In the twenty-first century, they have forged new sub-genres, generated new consumer demographics, and provided soundtracks for Hollywood films, cutting-edge animations, adverts, websites, and repertoire for virtual holographic pop stars. Adults are not immune to the pleasures offered by children's records.

Exposure to music during childhood is an almost universal experience, especially in the West, with some children's songs (and recordings of those songs) remaining popular across generations, cultures and disparate childhoods. These songs document a wide range of childhood experiences, reflect adults' desires for the amusement and education of their children, and play their part in shaping the childhood that they reflect. So it is surprising to find little academic assessment of the musical culture of childhood or the records made specifically for children.

Compared to the volume of academic work on children's literature, television, films, digital media and other areas of children's culture, children's music has been largely ignored. Unlike playground songs, nursery rhymes, lullabies and other children's songs in the oral tradition, records are commercial products containing aural texts that remain musically, lyrically and sonically identical with each repeated play. Whether as objects and artefacts packaged with photos, sleeve artwork, and booklets, bundled with toy record players, broadcast on the radio, downloaded as mp3s or streamed, there is much textual and contextual matter to analyse and discuss.

University music departments have often been slow to accept the cultural and aesthetic value of mainstream popular music; unsurprisingly, children's music has been given a wide berth by even the most broad-minded music scholars. Its universal nature renders it mundane and ubiquitous, yet conversely, children are

¹ I use the word 'records' to describe not only the rotating discs made of vinyl, shellac and other materials, but any of the subsequent and previous playback formats for musical 'recordings'.

often the 'Other' in culture and in scholarship. The low cultural status of children's music derives from its associations with didactic education, popular music, commercialism, perceptions of simplicity in the music and lyrics, and misplaced beliefs in the directness of the communication. Children's music it seems lacks the interpretative potential, artistry, poeticism and other Dionysian qualities that repeatedly draw music scholars to classical, and rock music. The links with mothers, kindergartens and primary school teachers feminises music for children, rendering it unattractive to the frequently androcentric scholarship of rock and pop. In avoiding an analysis of children's music, adults dodge the extended period of reflection on their own childhoods and considerations of the complexity of what it might mean to be a child, thus safeguarding their constructed notions of what it means to be an adult. However, as discussed below, children's music primarily reflects adults' relationships with children. It helps to define the social spaces and modes of expression that adults impose on children through the construction of social and cultural norms.

This study aims to answer a range of questions in two main areas. The first questions concern categorisation. What defines records made for children? How are they different from those made for teens or adults? How do the music, lyrics, singing and other sonic factors characterise the records as being 'for children'? How do contextual aspects such as marketing, visuals and the nature of the broadcast media play a part in defining records for children? Can children's music be categorised in other extra-textual ways, such as by ideology, intent or default? What part do children play in such definitions? How and why have definitions changed over time? The first four main chapters and chapter seven directly address these questions through examination of albums, radio shows and TV programmes that make their intentionality explicit by labelling their products as being 'for children'. Despite my insistence that children's music with high degrees of childness marketed directly to children always contains traces of its adult origins, the albums and songs of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Lead Belly, *Bagpuss*, *Children's Choice*, *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show*, Baby Einstein, Punk Rock Baby and *The Mozart Effect* were all created with children (and sometimes their adult carers) in mind.

My second, and related, consideration is the role of the adults. What do adults communicate to children and to other adults through children's music? How do children's records indicate how adults perceive children, what they want them to know, to understand, how they want them to behave, and what they want them to become? What are the dominant ideologies being communicated? How are issues such as education and entertainment framed through children's music? What role does nostalgia play in the choices adults make in creating records for children? How exactly are these embedded and encoded within the various textual elements of children's records? How do the music, the lyrics and the studio production techniques affect reception? Finally, how do records made for children contribute to and reflect 'childhood', the ever-shifting category that adults construct socially and 'impose' on children?

Chapters six, seven and eight best exemplify how music with high levels of childness is increasingly appealing to adults. The case studies of Baby Metal and vocaloids in particular (chapter eight) examine not only the commercial appeal to adults of children and representations of children, but the wider infantilising influence of such an aesthetic on culture that would have historically been categorised as 'adult'. The discussions of tween music provide a transition between the earlier considerations of music for children and the later chapters which detail music in which children (as performers and digitised representations), texts with high levels of childness, and other depictions of childhood are consumed largely by adults. Again, the once liminal cultural space now known as tween and my analysis of *Hannah Montana* and Miley Cyrus provides the tipping point. As a child star creating products for older children (twens), Cyrus transition into adulthood has combined with a similar adultification of her music and image, with a resulting shift in her intended audience.

My study aims to redress the neglect of the academy by examining a range of case studies to reveal how specific children's records reflect and construct specific childhoods in different social, historical and geographical contexts. As such, I provide analyses of a variety of discourses of childhood, and key theoretical concepts before examining societal attitudes to children in contingent synchronic

settings. Furthermore, I employ a structuralist approach to reveal the stability and endurance of specific ideologies of childhood, and to investigate the competing and often contradictory ways in which these have manifested themselves in specific examples of children's music. Diachronic analysis helps to identify the commonalities of the childhood experience and highlight any residual trends across history, cultures, and media. The study 'listens in' on childhood and explores the ways the adults view children, beliefs that shape children's lives. It exhumes and examines the 'fossil record' (Hollindale, 1997, p. 60) of the conversations that adults have conducted with children through musical artefacts over the years.

The research is inherently interdisciplinary drawing on childhood studies, literary theory, media studies, sociology, music industry studies and philosophies of education. I balance social anthropology with cultural studies by exploring how issues of adults' power over children and dominant discourses of childhood manifest themselves in specific musical recordings, which are framed within commercial, industrial, familial and other institutions and practices. The fluidity of childhood as a construct becomes apparent through the thesis. I combine biographical data, policy documents, legal and commercial frameworks, marketing strategies, critical theory and a specific self-designed analytical method for the analysis of records made for children. The study focusses on definitions and ideologies of childhood, recorded music's role in the education and entertainment of children, the influence of adult nostalgia, the problems of implied readership, and the cultural positioning of childhood within wider family and other social groups. As such the work is an attempt to take children's music seriously, to align its status with the study of other children's media, to provide methodological foundations for the future investigation of records made for children, and to inspire other academics to expand on the data and analytical methods presented here in their own studies.

A series of carefully-chosen case studies has allowed me to highlight specific issues pertinent to the study of children's music, and to provide the points of comparison necessary for the selected methodology. Further, I have ensured that, wherever possible, the case studies have a relatively high profile. Despite my arguments that

some of the songs, products and artists are subversive of the genre in different ways, I have selected records that are 'mainstream' rather than obscure, songs and TV shows that most readers will have some prior awareness of, and music that is available for most people to listen to.

Specifically, chapter two examines the records made by Woody Guthrie and discusses the enduring link between folk music and childhood. I assess the role of innocence as an authenticating factor for both parties and highlight the dominance of the Romantic paradigm of childhood in folk music. I discuss how the unique circumstances of Guthrie's compositions (many were written by and with his three-year-old daughter) to challenge some of the claims made by Jacqueline Rose (1984) about the 'impossibility' of children's culture.

Chapter three looks at examples of children's music with seemingly-contentious 'adult' themes. Although a critique of the Romantic discourse of childhood exposes the mythology of innocence and children's separateness from adults, an investigation of nursery rhymes, the folk recordings made by Pete Seeger and Lead Belly, and the music of *Bagpuss* focusses on examples where the adultness of these enduring texts for children has been foregrounded. Peter Hollindale's concept of 'childness' is particularly useful for assessing how children can find even the most 'adult' of songs engaging and rewarding. An overview of the music and culture of music hall demonstrates not only the enduring appeal of combining adult themes with child-friendly music, but also the social and historical circumstances by which modern childhood developed alongside an entertainment industry driven by commercial intent, a theme that recurs in other chapters.

Continuing the theme of the age-categorisation of music, chapter four examines the BBC's long-running Saturday morning radio show *Children's Choice* and discusses how the corporation's changing ideology of childhood affected the nature of the show over its thirty-year history. Through analysis of recordings, playlists and policy documents, I consider how the BBC's stated 'family values' contributed to the canonisation of a number of recordings broadcast on the show, and explain why songs with seemingly-inappropriate adult lyrics were often requested on a

programme for children. I discuss the distorting effects of adult nostalgia and argue that categorising music by the age of the target audience is inherently problematic.

Analysis of the music of *The Muppet Show* in chapter five reveals the show's construction of a range of often-conflicting childhoods. These are informed by an intergenerational sensibility that supports the idea of 'family' rather than 'children's' entertainment, a discourse at odds with protectionist views of childhood innocence. A comparison with the songs of *Sesame Street* highlights the differences in educational philosophy. Whilst *Sesame Street* is more obviously didactic in a pedagogical sense, *The Muppet Show* offers a progressive and liberal educational philosophy through the use of satire, irony, pantomimic gestures, double-entendre and other signifiers of adulthood. Chapters four and five also highlight the shift in the primary medium of children's musical consumption from records and radio to television. The decade or so spanned by Henson's programmes (1969 to 1980) neatly frames the transition from the majority use of black and white to colour TV (around 1972 in the U.S.A. and 1977 in the U.K.; Crisell, 1997), a development that arguably enhanced the impact of *The Muppet Show*.

Chapter six details the age-related category known as 'tween' music and the issues of 'up-aging'² childhood. Tween music blurs the constructed boundary between childhood and adulthood, in which innocence (especially sexual innocence) and its protection is a defining trope. Miley Cyrus polarises media commentary; she is either empowering by redefining stereotypical definitions of young female sexuality, or she reinforces hetero-patriarchal constructions of gender. I argue that Cyrus subverts these dominant dyadic narratives. I analyse her deep, resonant and aurally-damaged voice and place her pitch, range and timbre into a wider context of child-stars, performance personae and female singing traditions. I argue that Cyrus' 'grown up' voice contributes to perceptions of premature sexualisation and loss of innocence central to media reportage. Lastly, I compare her singing voice on *Hannah Montana* (recorded when she was 13-15 years old) with her post-transition vocals and discuss how auto-tuning, and vocal sweetening symbolise the power

² Up-aging involves the production, marketing and consumption of products that would historically have been seen to be 'too old' for the age group in question.

relations involved in the constructions of both childhood, and young female sexuality.

The rapid growth in the commercialisation of children's music in the twenty-first century is the subject of chapter seven. I examine how markets have pushed downwards by analysing a variety of musical products aimed at toddlers, babies and even foetuses. Such practices have raised dissenting voices exemplified by Sue Palmer's *Toxic Childhood: How the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it* (2006). The discourse to shelter childhood from the corrupting influence of adults conflicts with an emerging paradigm of childhood empowerment described in David Buckingham's *After the death of childhood: Growing up in the age of electronic media* (2000). I examine the 'Mozart Effect' and reveal how Romantic discourses and specious educational claims have informed a wide range of related commercial products. Further, I look at how chart hits with 'grown up' themes are adapted and simplified for children in album franchises such as *Kidz Bop* and *Pop Jr*. The study highlights the inherent problems of categorising music by age, and once again, the persistence of adult's protection of children.

Finally, chapter eight examines the growing impact of children's culture on that of adults, and the musical manifestations of the infantilisation of society. I discuss how Kindie Rock subverts the Romantic archetype and challenges the ubiquity of folk and music hall as preferred vehicles for children's music by including 'grown up' genres such as indie, punk, new wave and country to deliberately foster intergenerational communities of music consumers. I explore how childhood and specifically girlhood are represented in the songs, videos and performances of Japanese heavy metal band Babymetal and discuss how the band's child singers subvert heavy metal through the use of a 'cute' kawaii aesthetic. Lastly, I examine the virtual synthesised Japanese pop stars known as vocaloids. Their animé and manga aesthetic involves exaggerated and sexualised notions of childhood, girlhood and female sexuality. The digitisation of the female voice and the digitised representation of girls by men largely for the consumption of other men is examined within the wider contexts of cultural infantilisation and with references to discourses of power and control. Specifically, I discuss how Foucault's concept of a

panopticon and the role of participatory surveillance produces hetero-normative and potentially paedophilic depictions of girls in the vocaloid community.

Lastly, I examine kawaii's roots in societal oppression and discuss how in an infantilised world, children are simultaneously fetishised for their authentic child-like traits, whilst being rendered socially invisible by a society that no longer aspires to adult values that rely on generational differentiation.

These analyses reveal how, at times, childhood is starkly differentiated from the world of adults with music constructing barriers that attempt to keep childhood 'adult free' and prevent the sharing of the 'secrets' of adulthood. Other childhoods are barely distinguishable in the music from adulthood with little concession being made for younger listeners. However, and more positively, many of the songs, records and musical TV shows offer words, music and visuals that allow children to construct something of their own childhood based on realistic reflections of children's 'lived' lives at that social and historical juncture.

As discussed throughout, 'childhood' the construction has little to do with real children but a great deal with adults' views of children. It differs from biological immaturity and chronological age (James and Prout, 1990, pp. 8-9), and whilst most societies construct their own particular version, childhood is not universal or natural, and is always linked to other variables such as gender, class, race and ethnicity. Furthermore, James and Prout assert that children are not merely passive recipients of an adult-constructed childhood, but are active participants in the process, and need to be seen as such (1990, p. 9). The following brief overviews of discourses of childhood show that notions of passivity and vulnerability often define them. I argue that the perpetuation of the myth of childhood innocence in children's music disempowers children, and diminishes the choices they make as listeners, consumers, artists, performers, and song writers.

1.1 Previous studies and key concepts

1.1.1 Analysis of recorded music for children

There are very few academic articles or books that examine the nature of children's recorded music, however, the small number that exist have proved useful. David Bonner's *Revolutionizing children's music: The Young People's Records and Children's Record Guild series 1946-77* (2008) provides excellent documentary evidence and insightful discussion into the songs released on the two record labels mentioned in the title. As a book-length study of children's records, it is perhaps unique in linking interviews with artists, arrangers and record company owners, and analyses of musical styles with more serious considerations of aesthetics, ideology, intention and the politics of children's music. The discussions of the genres of music that were considered by post-war record labels as being most beneficial for children's ears (folk rather than jazz or Tin Pan Alley; p. 60) and the analysis of the links between folk music and progressive education have informed my work on Woody Guthrie and Jim Henson.

1.1.2 Studies of music and children

Much of the academic work on children's music focusses on the teaching of music in schools (Green, 2008), music's wider educational value, (Jones and Robson, 2008, pp. 114-125), and its therapeutic use (Atwood, 1998; Berger, 2002; Headlam, 2006; Jones and Robson, 2008, p. 143). The final category includes studies of children with autistic spectrum conditions; these often focus on the extraordinary musical abilities of single case studies (Barrow, 2004; O'Connell, 1974; Young and Nettelbeck, 1995) with prodigious individuals often being assessed for absolute pitch, musical memory and other skills. Such work foregrounds the ideologically-contentious goal of 'normalising' participants through music therapy whilst perpetuating discourses of children's vulnerability and difference. Ethnographic studies explore how children use music in their everyday lives. For example, Patricia Shehan Campbell's *Songs in their Heads: Music and its meaning in children's lives*

(1998) focusses on children's reception of music in order to 'give a voice to the children on their musicking and musical thinking' (1998, p. 9). Although my study reflects on the benefits of reception-focussed study to triangulate some of the conjecture involved in issues of implied readership, such a methodology is beyond the scope of my present work. Similarly, the consideration of children's playground chants and musical games has proved a rich area of study. John Barton Hopkin studied the songs used by Jamaican children for skipping, handclapping and stone passing (1984). He describes the processes by which the songs found their way into the children's lives and how they were sustained within children's oral culture. Most importantly for my study, he attempted to find common musical and lyrical characteristics within the songs (*ibid.* pp. 4-11). His analyses have found their way into my main analytical method. Equally, Ann Osborn-Seyffert attempted an analysis of British-Canadian traditional children's singing games (1988). In her earlier work, she attempted to categorise children's music as a genre by analysing the melodies, rhythms, forms and lyrics of songs from Africa, Asia, Latin-America, Britain and the Appalachian Mountains. She identified many similarities, arguing that 'the child song may offer the greatest set of similar musical elements within any genre' (1988, p. 41). Again, her findings have been of great benefit in supporting and confirming the identification of the characteristics of children's records.

Of particular value has been Alisa Clapp-Itnyre's study which features incisive analyses of both the music and the lyrics ('the chords and verses'; p. 144) of nineteenth-century British children's hymns (2010). She argues that the adult themes and the accessible nature of the hymns includes and empower the child singers as active participants. She notes how the songs' espousal of notions of innocence simultaneously refutes the 'childness' of children by addressing them as 'little adults' (2010, p. 146). Clapp-Itnyre makes use of Peter Hollindale's term and concept ('childness') which I describe below and have adopted as my preferred word to describe the degree to which particular children's records reflect constructed notions of childhood. Further attributes of the textual nature of children's music were suggested by Liz Giuffre in her study of the popular Australian

children's band The Wiggles (2013). She identified factors such as repetition, a 'pre-school aged mode of sonic address ... simple production values ... minimal harmonies ... simple call and response constructions ... simplified arrangements ... clear rather than manipulated vocal tones ... [and] clear diction' (Giuffre, 2013, p. 150). The findings of the four studies above have contributed to Table 1 (p. 32), a compiled list of identifiable features of children's music. They have been supplemented by similar text-based work on children's literature.

1.1.3 Studies of children's literature

Despite the obvious differences in the nature of the medium, studies of children's literature have proved among the most useful sources for the assessment of children's music not only for analysing the words of songs but for wider considerations of issues such as intertextuality, implied readership, competence and focalisation. Literature scholars discuss how the meaning of the words is affected by paratextual information; in the case of books this consists of illustrations, photographs, fonts and designs. Adapting such ideas to an analyses of children's records allows the consideration of how musical attributes, the sonic factors of the recording, and any attendant visual material (record sleeves, promotional videos, performance gestures) can affect the meaning of the lyrics. The study of children's literature has produced significant amounts of scholarship (Hall, 2003; Hollindale, 1997; Hunt, 1999; Lesnik-Oberstein, 1994; Lurie, 1990; Stephens, 1992). The 'Golden Age' texts of the Victorian and Edwardian eras have been subject to many significant analyses and provide useful comparisons for discussing the tropes of the main discourses of childhood. Of particular value has been Peter Hunt's *Understanding children's literature* (1999), an edited collection of essays which contains Karin Lesnik-Oberstein's *Essentials: What is children's literature? What is childhood?* (1999) and Charles Sarland's *The impossibility of innocence: Ideology, politics, and children's literature* (1999). Hunt highlights the key issues of children's books, describing their richness, value and multitude of purposes (passing the time, fostering literacy, expanding the imagination, communicating social attitudes, helping children deal with issues; 1999, p. 11). He discusses the

importance of recognising children's agency and how they might 'read against the text' (1999, p. 6). The complex and fluid relationship between the text, the author, the reader and wider societal norms, norms expressed in the equally complex and fluid construction of 'childhood', all affect (and produce) the child's 'agency' and their ability to be 'agentic'. Florian Esser describes agency as 'children's active contribution to the shaping of their social worlds and to society' explaining how agency is not a human capacity opposed to society but is socially produced' (2016, p. 53). Yet one of the mechanisms that shapes a child's agency is the way that texts imply a particular readership through the various textual elements from which they are constructed. This concept of the 'implied reader' (Hunt, 1999, p. 7) is used to help describe:

what a given text calls upon a reader to know and to do: to know, in terms of experience of both life and literature; to do, in terms of producing a meaning for this particular text, in time, from start to finish.

(Peggy Whalen-Levitt in Nodelman, 2016, p. 272).

As described above, implied readership, agency and the idea of reader competence (see below) are shaped by a multitude of interrelated factors which also affect the text itself and the particular discourses of childhood that are asserting themselves at the nexus that is the 'reading event' or, in the case of music, 'the listening event'.

To Nodelman adult desires are key to the definition of children's culture. In *The hidden adult: Defining children's literature*, he describes the genre as 'what producers hope children will read' and, more specifically, 'what adult teachers, librarians, and parents will be willing to purchase for them to read' (2008, pp. 4-5). Further, he highlights the intertextuality with adult literature and hence its intergenerational nature:

Cultural and ideological forces at work in specific milieus interweave to produce for children texts with distinctive characteristics, characteristics they tend to share with other texts produced in the same time or place or by the same group of people but not necessarily with other texts for children

(Nodelman, 2008, p. 7).

Continuing his central theme, he describes 'the hidden text' as information which is not explicitly stated but derived by more experienced readers to 'understand more than is actually said' (2008, p. 9). This notion of implied readership is a key consideration in reception studies, the area of analysis that is primarily concerned with the audience (in this case children) and how they use texts to form meanings and identities. The term derives from Wolfgang Iser and was brought to children's cultural studies by Aiden Chambers (in Saxby, 1997, p. 23). Implied readership is informed by communication theory especially semiotics and the interpretation and 'mythologisation' (Roland Barthes, 1957) of signs and symbols. Umberto Eco's ideas about 'open' works (Barthes' 'writerly texts') and 'textual cooperation' are closely related. Iser suggested that there is always a gap between the reader who is implied by the text and the actual reader of that text. This gap is filled in an active process by the reader who actualises (or concretises) an interpretation of the text based on their experiences and thoughts (in Shi, 2013, p. 984). Chambers talks about how the author 'creates a relationship with a reader in order to discover the meaning of the text' (in Saxby, 1997, p. 23). On one level, this implies that any text that children can (or are allowed to) engage with, and from which children can derive meaning (any text, I would argue) could serve as a text 'for children'. However, reception theory also stresses the role of the text in the process. Implied readers can be targeted through the process of 'focalisation' (Gérard Genette's concept). In this case, the intended audience member is drawn in by the use of a first person narrative in an attempt to identify with the main character. The age, gender, social status and other aspects of the character may be employed to focalise readers. Saxby lists other textual attributes that may imply the reader such as 'the linguistic range and register ... the gaps, the frames of reference (intertextuality) and the inherent ideologies' (1997, p. 23). Songs written, chosen, recorded and broadcast for children (or families, with children as a sub-set) are the products of an industrial process in which decisions about the text (lyrical themes, the placement of the words, the musical aspects such as melodic intervals, tempi, harmonic backing) are informed by marketing decisions, the skill of the writers, and the resources available. However, many songs that have become identified with children derive

from a variety of non age-specific backgrounds. Independent of the text's original intended readership, repeated inclusion on children's media cements the text with new intended readers. It is important to differentiate between the implied reader and the actual reader of the text. The individualised response of actual readers prevents a definite, fixed reading of a text and actualises a wide range of responses, and indeed, readers. Children's texts are ultimately 'what producers hope children will read' (Nodelman, 2008, p. 4).

A second key concept is that of literary competence. Originated by Michael Riffaterre and Noam Chomsky (Selden, 1989, pp. 126-128), competence defines the ability of the reader to go beyond the surface meaning and to decode the various meanings that are not explicitly stated. When considering lyrics, the competent reader can transcend the language of the words on the page (or in the song) and decipher wider, potentially more ambiguous meanings that are implied, rather than foregrounded. Literary devices such as metaphor, irony and sarcasm rely on context, tone and a close reading of the text. Again, this need not be age dependent. This concept is referred to in chapter three in considerations of the 'adult' content in examples of children's music and again in chapters four (on the BBC's *Children's Choice*) and five (on the music of *The Muppet Show*) whilst discussing intertextuality and a range of devices aimed to hide some of the 'adult' content of music hall songs, such as double entendre. Some of the references in well-known music hall songs require high levels of competence and an excellent working knowledge of the gay subculture of the late 1800s for example. As well as helping to decode lyrics, competence can be applied to the musical elements of a song, where intertextuality, and a knowledge of conventions that manipulate affect can reveal deeper meanings. At its simplest, the use of the minor key often codes as melancholy in Western diatonic music and as such is rarely used due to the dominance of the Romantic discourse and its composition of childhood optimism and happiness. Its use in the verses of canonised children's songs 'Nellie the elephant' and 'Teddy bear's picnic' adds a sense of tension ('if you go down in the woods today ...'), mystery and caution ('one dark night ...'). Again, musical competence does not necessarily differentiate child and adult readers. The concept

of implied readership allows a consideration of audiences not merely as an amorphous, homogenised mass but as individuals who through own specific competence brought to that particular text at that precise socially-prescribed moment are able to decode the implied meanings of the various textual elements offered to them. Mavis Reimer describes the implied reader as having:

A range of reading positions from which the text is legible—from the minimum of skills and knowledges needed to decode a text to something approaching an ideal reader, who is able to fill in all of the gaps in the text and to trace the intertexts from which the text is woven.

(in Nodelman, 2016, p. 272)

However, there is an inherent tension between what children, as agents of their own meaning creation and identity formation, can elicit from a given text, and the amount to which that text, as a device that fosters particular views of childhood, allows them to do so. Nodelman notes how ‘paradoxically, then, even texts that purport to encourage children to act independently or creatively are in the process of attempting to persuade readers to a desired end’ (2016, pp. 272-273).

A third key aspect to investigate is the commonly held assertion that texts for children are ‘simple’ and that ‘simplicity’ is closely associated with children’s naivety, innocence, naturalness and authenticity. Hunt repeatedly refutes this idea stating that ‘the most apparently straightforward act of communication is amazingly intricate’ (1999, p. 2). Furthermore, Lesnik-Oberstein (1999) draws on a number of other authors to refute that children’s literature is characterised by simplicity. For example, Natalie Babbitt suggests that children’s texts are full of complex emotions which are often serious, such as in the books of Rudyard Kipling (in Lesnik-Oberstein, 1999, p. 24). Most interesting, she raises the issue of trying to define children’s literature, citing Fred Inglis, Barbara Wall, Nicholas Tucker and others to show how children’s books differ from those for adults (in Lesnik-Oberstein, 1999, p. 18). Myles McDowell offers a nine-point guide to such a task (in Lesnik-Oberstein, 1999, p. 23).

These ‘essential differences’ include the fact that children’s books generally:

- Are shorter
- use active rather than passive voices
- favour dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection
- feature child protagonists
- use conventions
- have a clear-cut moral code
- are optimistic rather than pessimistic
- use child-oriented language
- have specific plot types

Lesnik-Oberstein identifies the ‘the child in the book’ approach to literary analysis (1999, p. 23). Identifying the dominant, most common and ‘typical’ features of children’s books helps to generate workable categories essential to the production, dissemination and consumption of children’s cultural products. The application of this approach to specific texts reveals the ways in which they are characteristic of the genre. Atypical features may imply that texts, in part, or in specific aspects are not recognisable as being ‘for children’ and may cease to be recognised or accepted as such by industry or intended audience. McDowell’s list and others have proved useful in the formulation of my own analytical method and my approach to the analysis and categorisation of children’s records, although, as described below, the developmental model came from studies of autism. Perry Nodelman (2004) lists dozens of such defining features, yet in the forty children’s books he reviews, he is disappointed by the levels of sameness, standardisation and predictability (2004, p. 141). He highlights the problems central to the definition and sustenance of genre categories, and explains how producers often create homogeneous products based on unchallenging and normative stereotypes in a reductive cycle of lowered expectations and diminishing returns.

Nodelman’s list of ‘unconsidered assumptions about children’ (2004, pp. 144-161) includes:

- Children are innocent (i.e. dumb), and it is a good thing.
- Children’s innocence is a source of adult wisdom.
- Children are (and should be) wonderfully diverse in their racial and ethnic backgrounds and ought to rejoice in their cultural diversity.

- Children are intolerant. Books remind them to respect difference.
- Childhood is universal ... the same everywhere.
- Children are (or should be) joyously optimistic.
- Children are (or should be) cute - and are at their cutest when they are most inadequate.
- Children are inherently connected to and aware of the sensuous delights of the natural world. They are like animals.
- Children are both anarchic and orderly, childlike and mature, unrepressed and repressed.
- Children are ignorant and simple-minded, and they need to be taught things in simple obvious ways by simple, obvious adults.
- Children need to learn how to be childlike, and adults must teach it to them.
- Children need to learn how to be adults, and adults must teach it to them.

Nodelman highlights the disparity between the apparent simplicity of a text and the 'unspoken complexity' of its content. He calls this 'shadow text' (2008, p. 8) stating that:

The simpler it is, then the more obviously it will say less than it hints at, demand an implied reader who knows more - and therefore, the more likely it will be that the child readers who can make sense of it will understand more than is actually said.

(Nodelman, 2008, p. 9).

The shadow text exists in the 'gaps' in the simplistic sentences which the reader must 'fill in'. It also manifests in the illustrations in children's books that supplement the words in their communication of emotions, and other information. The shadow text of a children's music recording exists in the melodies, harmonies, tempi, vocal delivery and production devices which may support, conflict, and generally inform the emotional tone of the words. Often this extra information provides an adult perspective on the words that reveals a 'shadowy second focalization that represents more knowledge than the first and therefore attracts attention to the limitations of the first' (Nodelman, 2008, p. 28). He calls this 'an awareness of innocence' (2008, p. 22). Children's texts 'are constructed in ways that work to encourage readers to consider what it means to see or think in ways usually

considered to be childlike, ways defined by their relative lack of knowledge or complexity' (2008, p. 22).

However, the 'child in the text' approach is not without its opponents. Jacqueline Rose is perhaps the most extreme in her explanations of how she believes that children's texts exclude real children in their reliance on stereotypical tropes of childhood. Her article on Peter Pan is sub-titled 'the impossibility of children's fiction' (1984). In it she describes the 'fantasy' of communicating to children through books (1984, p. 58) and perceives a void between 'a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver)' (1984, p. 58). To Rose, the adult takes full control over the communication and thus the construction of childhood which becomes merely 'the product of adult presumptions and desires' (in Lowry, 2005, p. 1). By working to an established set of identifying features in the form of conventions or genre norms, authors of children's literature set up the child as 'an outsider to its own process' (Rose, 1984, p. 59). Not only does a children's book exclude the child reader through its use of tropes of innocence and innate goodness, and the construction of 'divisions which undermine any generalised concept of the child' (Rose, 1984, p. 62) but it then attempts to 'get at the child with the child it portrays' (1984, p. 58). To Rose, 'there is no child behind the category "children's fiction", other than the one which the category itself sets in place, the one which it needs to believe is there for its own purpose (1984, p. 65). Rose's assumptions lie in the belief that children exist in a 'lost world' devoid of sexuality and free from the threat of adulthood and that through their unmediated directness and lack of adult wiles, real children threaten adulthood (Nodelman, 1985, p. 98). The mythologised childhoods of children's literature hold off this threat 'by imposing a Utopian and unreal vision of innocence and purity upon children, and by expressing that vision again and again in children's fiction' (Nodelman, 1985, p. 98). Whilst Nodelman recognises that many children's books rely on notions of separateness, simplicity, and asexuality, he identifies a host of texts that present complex visions of the realities of children's lives in rich and subtle language that promotes multiple and contradictory interpretations (1985, p. 100). In adhering to a limited selection of well-rehearsed tropes that reflect stifling

notions of childhood, children's culture merely promotes a set of beliefs that foreground adult creators and fail to reflect anything of real children's lives. As Nodelman suggests, 'the real propaganda of most children's literature is not what it suggests children ought to become, but rather, what it assumes they already are' (p. 98).

The concepts of implied readership, competence and the relationships between authors, texts and readers are explored in Peter Hollindale's *Signs of childness in children's books* (1997). Hollindale suggests that the study of children's literature lacks the terminology to best express such a complex relationship. Rejecting terms such 'childish' ('a term of disparagement even when applied to children') and 'childlike' ('condescending'), he suggests the use of the archaic Shakespearian word 'childness' to describe not only 'the distinguishing feature of a text' but also 'the property that the child brings to the reading of the text' in a 'reading event' (Hollindale, 1997, pp. 45-47). Childness is a characteristic that both adults and children employ and express as part of their transaction via the production and interpretation of the text. For the child, childness is their 'developing sense of self in interaction with ... images of childhood'; for the adult, childness is comprised of their memories of childhood, reflections on what current society deems suitable for children, and concepts of personal hopes and aspirations for children (Hollindale, 1997, p. 49).

Most importantly for a structural approach to textual analysis, childness reflects the fluidity and the changeability of the relationship between children, authors and texts in different contexts, relationships that are 'rarely simple or coherent' and 'full of inconsistencies, stains and unspoken priorities' (1997, p. 76). As a tool for distinguishing between the text and child's experience of engaging with that text, childness allows judgements to be made about the adult author's intentions in relation to discourses of childhood that will, in most incidences reflect the differences and degree of separateness from adulthood. Hollindale's childness is a useful tool with which to critique the 'child in the text' approach and to recognise the role of children in constructing their own childhood.

Other key theoretical texts are explored in the following chapters, with their ideas applied to specific case studies. For example, Neil Postman's *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982) describes the effacement of long-standing discourses of childhood through changes in broadcasting media, ideas discussed in chapter eight which concerns infantilisation and an increasingly age-shared musical culture. Like Rose's inflammatory 'impossibility', Postman's 'disappearance' posits an extreme position which I critique through references to childness and implied readership. Although often polemic, Benjamin Barber's *Consumed: How markets corrupt children, infantilize adults and swallow citizens whole* (2007) has been influential in cementing ideas about changing definitions of childhood and adulthood, and the inculcation of childlike traits on the consumption habits of adults. Again, these ideas are explored more fully in chapter seven.

1.2 Constructing childhood

Childhood may be defined as *the life period during which a human being is regarded as a child, and the cultural, social and economic characteristics of that period*

(Frones, 1994 in Kehily, 2004, p. 95)

Ideas of simplicity, innocence and other attributes discussed above are constructed and disseminated through particular discourses of childhood. These paradigms frame ideas about childhood, influencing how children are viewed and treated by wider society, and affecting how children view themselves. Such constructions are fluid and discursive, with conflicting and contradictory discourses detectable simultaneously. An understanding of the main discourses is essential for an informed perspective on children's music. Comprehensive accounts of the following constructions are included in Chris Jenks' *Childhood* (1996), Allison James and Adrian James' *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy and social practice* (2004), Mary Jane Kehily's edited collection *An introduction to childhood studies* (2004) and

others. Jenks indicates the social construction of discourses about childhood and highlights the usefulness of social theories such as feminism and Marxism in deconstructing them (1996, p. 29). He advocates the use of post-structuralism to unlock the child-adult binary in order to explore multiple identities and critique the processes through which particular discourses of childhood are 'naturalised'.

One particularly resonant discourse represents children as partially formed, incompetent, 'becoming' and always in a process of growth. In the 'tabula rasa' discourse formulated by John Locke children are 'not-knowing'. In his *Some thoughts concerning education* (1693), Locke suggested that children grow through play, looking at pictures of animals, being read to and having their imaginations stimulated by the adults around them (1693, p. 156). In this conception, children are like a 'blank slate' (tabula rasa) waiting to be written on by adults, experience of life and the outside world. This concept is developed in 'the Piagetian paradigm' (Jenks, 1996, p. 22) or the developmental psychology paradigm (Jenks, 2004, p. 79). Psychologist Jean Piaget theorised that children develop 'competencies' (adult-defined abilities) and cognitive growth in a strict and universal sequence. According to Piaget, at a given age, a child can be judged to be 'normal'. Such a view paints the child as incomplete and always in development when compared with adults (MacKay, 1973, in Jenks, 2004, p. 85).

A contrasting view sees children's development less determined by age and biology, but by cultural and social exposure. This social construction involves the transmission of images, representations (Kehily, 2004, p. 29), codes and 'popular imagery' (Holland, 2004). The discourses discussed below and throughout the thesis are all socially constructed, a process which reveals multiple and diverse constructions of childhood. In such a model cultural values are disseminated through social practice; such values are not only 'passed on' from generation to generation, and from adults to children, but, as implied by reception studies, children can create meaning from such messages, and contribute to the construction of their own childhoods.

1.2.1 An historical approach to childhood

An historical approach to the study of childhood is essential to an understanding of modern day childhood by highlighting how different attitudes to children have existed in the past. Such an approach underpins other concepts and discourses of childhood and can reveal 'hidden histories' such as those of non-western and working class children (Kehily, 2004, p. 2). It also helps to recognise the profound influence on childhood made by Ariès, Piaget, Locke, Rousseau, Blake, Wordsworth, Dickens, Spock, Leach, Mills and Mills, James, Jenks and Prout, and others discussed below. Furthermore, historical study reveals a time when childhood in its current conception did not exist.

The work of controversial social historian Philippe Ariès gives weight to the idea that childhood is not merely the result of age and biology, stature and strength, or cognitive immaturity, but is constituted socially and culturally at specific historical moments. For example, he suggested that children of the Middle Ages were 'little adults' sharing activities, rituals and working lives, learning trades and rural skills with grown-ups from a very young age (Calvert, 1998, p. 72; Lombardo, 1997, p. 3). There was little age differentiation for styles of clothing, music and celebratory activities, such as the drinking of alcohol. Older children cared for younger siblings whilst all were exposed to 'real life' issues of illness, death and sexuality, issues captured in the songs and tales of an oral folk culture. This is very different to the childhood of separation seen in other discourses. Such circumstances continued into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where children would work alongside adults in mills, mines and fields, their small hands and bodies ideally suited to crawling under looms and up chimneys (Kline, 1998, p. 98). Unlike the children of the industrial revolution, modern western children are 'emotionally "priceless" but economically "worthless"' (Zelitzer in Kehily, 2004, p. 3). Developments in contraception, medicine and the legal status of children in the areas of employment and education began to define modern childhood, yet in many working class households, children would have lived and worked alongside their parents well into the twentieth century.

Concepts of modern western childhood are generally thought have developed between the late nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century (Kehily, 2004, p. 2), although influential philosophical, cultural and legal debates took place before then. An historical overview of childhood highlights the changing status of children in society as dictated by the ages at which they can leave school, vote, marry,³ have lawful sexual relations,⁴ and participate in other signifiers of adulthood. British children currently have full criminal responsibility at ten, can work legally alongside adults at thirteen (Lavalette, 2005, p. 157), get married and join the army at sixteen yet need to be eighteen to get a tattoo without their parents' permission. In the U.K., there is no minimum age to undergo cosmetic surgery. Before 1969 in England and Wales, the voting age was twenty-one (Woodhead and Montgomery, 2002. p. 9). The 1989 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* defines a child as being under the age of eighteen (*ibid.*, p. 5).

1.2.2 The Romantic discourse of childhood

In this, perhaps the most influential discourse, childhood is defined by innocence, purity, naivety, vulnerability and an inherent goodness, free from the corrupting influence of adulthood. The Romantic childhood is one of 'joy, freedom, imagination and opportunity' (Scruton, 1997, p. 1) informed by a unique set of rules that only apply to children. Romantic poets and authors depict it as a lost world, an island, a secret garden or some other isolated area of nature. Such an idealised childhood is one of separation from adults and of exclusion from the rituals of adulthood; Romantic children require the protection of adults, hence the likening of such a fortified state to a prison (Holt, 1975, in Scruton, 1997, p. 1) or a ghetto (Gura, 1994, in Scruton, 1997, p. 1). Cunningham suggests that 'to think of children as potential victims in need of protection is a very modern outlook, and it probably does no-one a service' (2006, p. 245). However, traditional folk tales such as 'Red Riding Hood' in which a young girl enters a dark, brooding forest, before being consumed by a 'big

³ It was common for aristocratic girls of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to marry at twelve years of age (boys at fourteen) and have their own children soon after (Kehily and Montgomery 2004, p. 58).

⁴ The age of consent in the U.K. was twelve until 1885 (Kehily and Montgomery 2004, p. 61) when it was raised to the current sixteen years of age for heterosexuals. Equality of the age of consent for homosexual men came in 2001.

bad' wolf, allegorically depict childhood innocence and the devastating consequences of its loss.

Representations of childhood innocence in visual art and literature have fuelled the Romantic discourse (Gittins, 2004, p. 35). Sixteenth century Renaissance paintings depicted putti as innocent naked young boys. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile* (1762) greatly influenced notions of the 'child of nature', a link explored more thoroughly in the next chapter with reference to children's folk music. *Émile* drew on Locke's ideas and contains Rousseau's thoughts about raising the 'natural man' from birth, through infancy, to choosing a career and courtship as a teenager. Advice about childrearing and education is offered through descriptions of the boy Émile (and, later in the book, Rousseau's much-criticised thoughts about the upbringing of female Sophie). His philosophies on such matters as the birthing, swaddling, weaning, breastfeeding and bathing of babies, and the sleep patterns, diet (children should be largely vegetarian, p. 118), language and dress were extremely influential, leading to much social reform especially in the area of education. To Rousseau, children are innately good; the book opens with the lines 'God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil' (p. 5). His attitude to child rearing is one of laissez-faire ('the chief thing is to prevent anything being done', p. 9), and of allowing 'children to be children'. Rousseau's ideal childhood is one of fresh air, copious amount of fresh fruit and vegetables (p. 26) and an outdoor 'fend for yourself' mentality influenced by the one book recommended for youngsters in *Émile*, *Robinson Crusoe* (p. 147). To Rousseau, childhood should be a time of goodness and a sanctuary from the corrupting influences of adulthood.

Portraits of children through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries frequently made use of 'natural' settings such as fields, parks and gardens, often in close proximity to young animals, especially pets and domestic animals. Late eighteenth century poets further developed Rousseau's ideals; Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth and others depicted childhood as a state of 'original innocence' often associated with rural settings (Hall, 2003, pp. 141-145). 'Golden Age' authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries continued the theme.

Concepts of innocence and its protection, of purity, simplicity and naivety, of mythical worlds untainted by adulthood are central to writings about children and childhood. Themes of vulnerability and a 'safe, protected world of play, fantasy, and innocence' (Stephens, 1995, p. 14) underpin the books, films and in this case, records made for children. However, the nature of childhood innocence as an idealised adult construction has changed historically. Positive qualities such as sensitivity, divinity and associations with nature have been replaced with a vacuous sexuality whereby children are 'little more than sexuality-not-there' creating 'an unthinkable eroticism that required us to think of little else' (Kincaid, 2010). As discussed in chapter six, the Romantic discourse is gendered with the innocence of girls being more heavily policed than that of boys. In the twenty-first century, innocence is almost exclusively understood as a lack of awareness of adult sexuality (Kincaid, 2010). Concepts of innocence and its loss are inexorably tied to that of nostalgia, 'the intense feeling of a precious reality from which we are separated by adulthood and to which we turn back for some true identity, for which we yearn as our very essence' (Heath, 1997, pp. 17-18). While depictions of the baby Jesus in art from the seventeenth century onwards, and consideration of New Testament teachings have fostered the Romantic discourse (Gittins, 2004, p. 29; Hoyles and Evans, 1989), notions of 'original sin' have been derived mainly from the readings of the Old Testament, and inform the next influential paradigm of childhood.

1.2.3 The Puritan/Evangelical discourse of childhood

Conflicting interpretations of the Bible have produced an almost polar opposite response to the Romantic child. In the Evangelical discourse which emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, children are inherently evil. Based on Puritan theology from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this construction depicts inherently sinful and fundamentally demonic children who can only be rescued from an afterlife in Hell through strict punishment administered by parents and other adults. Children were 'sinful polluted creatures' (*Evangelical Magazine*, quoted in Hendrick, 1997). To the Calvinists, original sin meant 'total depravity'. Calvin wrote that children's 'whole nature is a certain seed of sinne . . . abominable

to God' (in Clapp-Itnyre, 2010, p. 148). To Methodist and Calvinist church leaders, children were in need of correction. Puritan sermons encouraged parents to beat out sin in order to save children's souls (Gittins, 2004, p. 31). The book of Proverbs dictates that 'he who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him' (13:24); children's 'original sin' give parents 'divine authority' to physically impose of their views on children (Wilcox, in Smith, 2007). Well into the eighteenth century, Methodist leader John Wesley was encouraging parents to 'break the will of your child ... into subjection to yours that it may be afterward subject to the will of God' (1872, in James and Prout, pp. 37-38), a view still popular with the Christian Right and advocated in Michael Pearl's much-criticised *To Train Up a Child* (1994). Proponents felt that the only way to alter a child's naturally depraved nature was to reject all forms of frivolity (Gittins, 2004, p. 32). Play was something to fear. These conflicting readings of childhood innocence and its lack were somewhat tempered by the teachings of St. Augustine who, whilst acknowledging that children were born evil, allowed them to be baptised to cleanse them of their sin (Piper, 2000). William Golding's 1954 novel *Lord of the flies* depicts children's savage and uncivilised nature. Where the Romantic discourse portrays a bucolic and pastoral childhood, the Evangelical discourse is its violent and primal flipside, representing untamed brutality and vicious primitivism. The Evangelical discourse was still popular in Victorian times where it vied for popularity with Romantic constructions.

The Biblical tale of the loss of innocence, the gaining of 'knowingness' and the consequential banishment from the Garden of Eden resonates through this discourse. The allegory of children leaving a protected state and having to 'grow up' in the corrupt adult world is a trope of literature, art and movies and remains resonant, especially in media depictions of children as criminals. Kehily notes how while 'childhood innocence is celebrated and protected ... individual children who transgress are vilified' by the media and other adult commentators (2004, pp. 15-16). Reportage of crimes against children generally draw on the Romantic discourse, presenting them as vulnerable and helpless victims. The 1996 murder of six-year-old beauty queen JonBenét Ramsey and the 2007 disappearance of three-year-old

Madeleine McCann are good examples. However, when children are both the victims and the perpetrators of crime, Romantic and Evangelical constructions present opposing discourses often within the same news piece (Cunningham, 2006, p. 243; Lombardo, 1997, p. 1). Media responses to the death of two-year-old James Bulger at the hands of two ten-year-olds in Merseyside in 1993 often painted the victim ('Has justice betrayed the little boy who was never allowed to grow up?', *Daily Mail*, 2000) as an innocent 'angel',⁵ whilst the killers were 'freaks of nature', 'two fiends' with 'hearts of unparalleled evil' (*The Mirror* and the *Daily Star*, in Kehily, 2004, p. 17).

The torture and attempted murder of an eleven and nine-year-old by two boys aged ten and eleven in Edlington in 2009 attracted similar 'simplistic views' (Davis and Bourhill, 1997, p. 31) and moral panic (p. 29); reports featured vivid descriptions of the torture alongside moralising quotes from members of parliament (Press TV, 2010). A childhood defined by innocence is eradicated by its absence. With the U.K. having the lowest age of criminal responsibility in Europe (ten years old), the child perpetrators above were tried and convicted as adults. 'Children are at risk' notes Heath, 'but children also are the risk' (1997, p. 25).

The Evangelical discourse is discussed more thoroughly in chapters three and five where it is used to highlight concepts of a delinquent and sinful childhood framed by music hall culture and the corrupting influence of city life as opposed to the Romanticism of folk and the rejuvenating powers of the countryside. Whilst Rose, Nodelman, Lesnik-Oberstein and others have pointed out the potentially unbridgeable gap between real children and the cultural and social constructions of childhood that serve to attract and amuse them, it is important nonetheless to deliberate on such constructions and examine their sometimes complex and paradoxical drivers. Although such discourses are useful 'shorthand' ways of making sense of the world, similar to the categorisation of music described below, the process of sorting, labelling, selecting and deselecting is political. Reducing complex variables to binaries (Romantic child/Evangelical child. Adult/Child. Male/Female)

⁵ The press depicted Bulger as younger than he was when he died. He was often referred to as 'Jamie' rather than 'James', and pictures of him as a baby were frequently used rather than images of him as a three-year-old.

reduces complexity, yet such reduction comes bundled with ideologies of power and control (Derrida, in Wilchins, 2004, p. 40). Rather than pursuing an oppositional relationship by creating a further binary (music for children/music for adults), my method of analysis explores difference and embraces complexity by placing songs on a spectrum of childness. Derrida points out the value of deconstructing binaries and other naturalised categories in order to better examine the 'truths' that reside in complexity and difference (in Wilchins, 2004, pp 40-43). Exploring the 'grey areas' reveals alternatives, what Derrida called alterity, and in the case of this thesis, helps to explore the complex relationships between the construction of childhood and real children. As Wilchins points out 'saying that something is constructed is not the same as saying it is not real (2004, p. 44). I am conscious that many of the case studies chosen for this thesis have more complex relationships with constructed and normative notions of children's music. As stressed throughout, such atypicality is subversive. The deconstruction of norms inherent in textual analysis and the selection of subversive texts is designed to empower children in their negotiations with the politicised discourse that is childhood.

1.3 The Children's Music Quotient

Amid the extensive public debates about the effects of the media on children, very little attention has been paid to the material that is produced explicitly for them.

(Bazalgette and Buckingham, 1995, p. 5).

1.3.1 Categorising music by age

Categorising music by the age of the intended audience is inherently problematic.

Barbara Wall acknowledges that children's books differ from those of adults.

'Adults' she suggests 'speak differently in fiction when they are aware that they are addressing children' (in Lesnik-Oberstein, K. 1999. p. 18). Fred Inglis talks about a set of conventions that children's writers have adopted (in Lesnik-Oberstein, K. 1999. p. 18). Hollindale describes children's literature as:

A body of text with certain common features of imaginative interest, which is activated as children's literature by a reading event: that of being read by a child. A child is someone who believes on good grounds that his or her condition of childhood is not yet over.

(Peter Hollindale, 1997, p. 30)

These common features enable texts 'to establish meaningful transactions with child readers'. Further, children's texts must appeal to children, either in the past or in the present, be concerned with children, be relevant to their lives and exist in a form which is accessible for them (1997, p. 27).

A quantitative method of categorisation is proposed using twenty-nine attributes to assess the childness (the typicality, the conventionality) of three areas of children's music recordings. Organising and structuring of difference is essential to societies (Attali, 1985, p. 5), consumers and industries (Shuker 1994, p. 149). The organising rules need to be understood by all concerned parties (Fabbri, 1982, p. 52). Once the rules have been formulated, divergence from them makes the genre less identifiable. Strong divergence may make it unidentifiable. Audience expectation breeds industrial standardisation. Children's culture often regurgitates the same themes and formats, hence the enduring influence of the Romantic discourse (Nodelman, 2004, p. 164).

For the purposes of this study, analytical tools need to balance an understanding of such organising systems with the deconstruction of established paradigms in order to explore the messages that adults transmit. A number of methods of categorisation have been considered. The use of genre is prevalent in literature, film and games, yet music genres are constantly contested and can be highly fluid, revealing as much about the social processes that define them as the musical style in question. David Brackett defines 'musical style' as 'a bundle of characteristics that distinguish a socially recognized musical category or genre' (2002, p. 66). Genres draw on previously-held archetypes, and simplify the process of organising myriad data and ideas into workable categories (Hofstadter, 1985) providing 'maximum information with the least cognitive effort' (Rosch and Lloyd, 1978, p. 28). They

create boundaries which involves decisions about inclusion and exclusion, although these demarcations may be 'very blurry' (Hofstadter, 1985, p. 576) and 'fuzzy' (Roth and Frisby, 1986, p. 55). Inclusion is based on similarity to existing prototypes; attributes may have varying levels of 'typicality' (Rosch and Lloyd, 1978, p. 36; Roth and Frisby, 1986, p. 56). Hofstadter talks about 'getting at the essence of situations' (p. 578). To this end he proposes the use of a target diagram (something like an archery target or dartboard) whereby essential traits are positioned at the centre and those of increasingly less significance included in the outer concentric rings. Fabbri formulates a set of rules and hyper-rules (1982, p. 55). Like Fabbri, Hofstadter proposes a taxonomy whereby attributes are prioritised. However, although the ranking of children's music attributes by importance using the methods proposed by Fabbri and Hofstadter is clearly possible, my method relies on the selected attributes having equal status in order to deliver quantitative results. The inherence of subjectivity in the process of categorisation is clearly something to be embraced, yet for my quantitative method, I required a more objective and less taxonomical assessment of attributes that involved them being either present or absent in the recordings.

1.3.2 Attributes of children's music

I have devised a process of analysis that assesses and scores as a percentage the childness of children's music recordings. As discussed above, the selection of the attributes is based on typicality in order to 'get to the essence' of children's music. The twenty-nine defining features were identified and selected from the work of scholars in music and literature who have attempted in their own way to categorise their genre. Primarily, the list draws on previously-mentioned studies by Hopkin (of Jamaican playground songs, 1984), Shehan (of orally-transmitted children's songs, 1987), Clapp-Itnyre (nineteenth-century hymns, 2010), and Giuffre (Australian children's band The Wiggles, 2013). Their findings are summarised in Appendix 1. Three key signifiers of childhood distilled from a list of fifteen (Barber, 2007, p. 83; Bernardini, 2014, pp. 49-52) help to establish musical parameters.

To Barber, childhood prioritises:

Easy over hard
Simple over complex
Fast over slow

My categorisation translates the prototypical factors of the Romantic discourse of childhood, and some of the other signifiers listed above into musical traits (see Table 1, p. 32). Typical children's music involves linguistic simplification (Bhat. 1967; Fernald, 1985; Hayes and Ahrens, 1988). The voice patterns that parents use for their young children (Infant-directed or ID speech) contain shorter phrases, and shorter syllables with longer gaps between the phrases (Grieser and Kuhl, 1988), simplified phonology and grammar (Bhat, 1967, p. 33). High-pitched voices, especially female and maternal ones (Panneton-Cooper *et al*, 1997) and exaggerated intonation (Fernald, 1985) are typical.

Signifier of childhood	Musical trait	Signifier of adulthood	Musical trait
Rural	Acoustic instruments	Urban	Electric instruments
Naturalness. Purity	Clean sounds	Unnaturalness. Impurity	Distortion
Sweetness	Harmony	Unpleasantness	Discord
Western bias. Predictability	Scale-wise diatonic melodies	Eastern influences. Otherness. Mystery	Chromatic intervals
Simplicity	Simple chords (predominantly I, IV, V)	Complexity	Unusual chords
Happiness	Major tonality	Sadness	Minor tonality
Energy. Youth	Medium to fast tempi	Range from lethargy to mania	Wide range of tempi
European bias	No or little percussion	African influences	Repetitive drums
Ease of identity	Solo artists	More complex identity	Bands
Participation	Moving and singing	Observation	Listening
Smallness. Child	High voices and sounds	Bigness. Adults	Low voices and sounds
Fun. Laughter	Funny/nonsense themes	Melancholy. Crying	Serious themes
Authenticity	Typical genres: Folk and music hall	Artifice	Typical genres: Rock, pop, punk, metal, indie

Table 1
Musical traits derived from the Romantic discourse of childhood

ID speech (sometimes called 'motherese') is a form of 'affective prosody' designed to elicit emotional responses through the manipulation of tone, rhythm and emphasis (Monnot, Ross and Foley, 2004). Its key elements are embedded in my

analytical method. Cues from these wide range of sources have been supplemented with my own experience of writing, recording and performing music for children. This affords me a working awareness of the textual expectations of children's gatekeepers, purse holders (parents, radio programmers, festival bookers) and children themselves.

1.3.3 The Children's Music Quotient

The Children's Music Quotient (CMQ) is a method of categorisation that aims to quantify the childness of records made for children in an attempt to assess the intentions of the adult creators and thus their impact on children's lives through the construction of specific discourses of childhood, and the perpetuation (or otherwise) of stereotypical attributes. Twenty-nine criteria are arranged in to three categories (Music, Lyrics and Sonics). Each criterion is judged to be either present or absent in the recording. An attempt is made to illicit 'yes/no' answers to the closed questions posed by the largely objective criteria. However, in my critique of the methodology (chapter nine), I highlight the inherently subjective nature of dealing with aspects of voice, studio production, timbre and other features.

Scores in each category are tallied to produce a percentage that may be used separately to compare each category, or in combination to produce overall CMQ scores. The method was inspired, in part, by tests to diagnose Autism in children⁶ (Auyeung *et al*, 2008) and is designed to place each recording, or each aspect of the recording on a spectrum of childness. Such a method avoids the need for binary classifications. Eliciting definitive answers of whether specific texts are 'children's music' is not the intention. The CMQ provides an indicator of the *quantity* of typicality of children's music, and the three main categories provide some insight into the *quality* or nature of that typicality.

The categories, sub-categories and criteria are listed below and are available in tick box form in Appendix 2.

⁶ An online version by the same authors to test for autism in adults is available at <http://mindchecker.channel4.com/test-autism.html>.

Category 1: Music

Sub-category 1: *Melody and harmony*

- Overall melodic range of between a fourth and an octave
- Scale-wise melodies
- Melodic intervals of up to a sixth
- Reliance on tonic, subdominant and dominant chords
- Major key
- No or minimal vocal harmonic backing
- Perfect cadences

Sub-category 2: *Rhythm*

- Time signature of two four, three four or four four
- Obvious and regular rhythms
- High tempo (over 200bpm for duple meter)

Sub-category 3: *Form*

- AB (Verse/chorus) or AAA form
- Brevity (25% or more shorter than average hit of the year of release)

Category 2: Lyrics

- Strong use of perfect or half rhyme throughout
- High levels of metric repetition
- Short, discreet lyrical phrases
- Animal/rural theme
- Visual (as opposed to existential)
- Domestic setting (home and family)
- First-person narrator
- Child protagonist/character
- Obviously educational, didactic or moral intent
- Nonsense/comedy theme
- Majority of words have one or two syllables

Category 3: Sonics

- Child vocalist (or processed/speeded up adult vocal)
- Female vocalist
- Clear diction / highly enunciated vocal delivery
- Use of representational sound effects
- High-pitched tones (bells, glockenspiel, xylophone)
- Foregrounding of vocals in the mix

1.3.4 Explanations and critique

Musical limitations in aspects of the top-line melody promotes vocal participation in children (Dockray, 2005). This translates into CMQ attributes of overall melodic ranges of between a fourth and an octave, sequential melodic intervals of less than a sixth, and the use of predictable diatonic scale-wise melodies. The idea of childhood simplicity is embedded in CMQ criterion of words of one or two syllables,

the use of perfect rhyme, high levels of metric repetition. The optimism of the Romantic childhood is captured in the identification of humour and the use of nonsense whilst lyrical themes such as animals, rural settings, and home are also rewarded.

'Sonics' highlights the childness in the recording process and the impact of the production, mixing and mastering. The use of children as vocalists has been selected as a strong indicator of a text with high levels of childness. Female voices with clear diction and a highly-enunciated delivery are also tropes of recordings for children, especially from the first half of the twentieth century, and continue to dominate music for young children. A final trope particular to children's recordings is the obvious manipulation of adult voices to produce high-pitched timbres (Pinky and Perky, The Chipmunks, The Smurfs).

The CMQ is applied to songs in a range of case studies to offer some rationale as to their contemporary and enduring popularity, and their perceived 'suitability' for children by adult gatekeepers. It is used to assess the typicality or childness of sub-genres of children's music such as Kindie Rock in chapter seven, and the porous nature of the borders of cross-over categories such as tween in chapter five. As mentioned previously, the CMQ uses what literary theorists would call 'the child in the text' approach. It assembles a range of characteristics of a particular discourse of childhood, based on Romantic concepts of innocence. The concerns raised by Rose and Nodelman focussed on the disparity between real children and the strange adult-constructed version of childhood that they are presented with in their culture. To Rose, the mismatch creates an impasse. To Nodelman, it traps the child in a world of separateness and creates 'strangers in our midst' (1992). Furthermore, it creates homogeneity in the product and by extension the child.

Nodelman bemoans:

More of the same bland serviceable stuff ... a vision of childhood that is maddeningly consistent from book to book, maddeningly normative in its assumptions about what children are or should be, and maddeningly limited in what it so consistently takes to

be normal ... an exceedingly narrow and repressive view of what they already are or ought to try and become'

(Perry Nodelman, 2004, p. 141)

'The child in the text' approach observes the fixedness and rigidity of a text. Lesnik-Oberstein describes how 'even if that child's presence is assumed, 'identification' cannot account for reading which is not a perpetual reading of the self ... it cannot account for ... learning of the new, or escapism (1999, p. 26). In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), a book that repeatedly reflects on childhood innocence and its loss, J.D. Salinger's sixteen-year-old protagonist Holden Caulfield comments on the importance of the permanence of childhood objects, and their importance in holding off the 'fall' into adulthood. He says:

The best thing, though, in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. ... Certain things, they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone. I know that's impossible.

(Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, 1951, pp. 127-128)

Like any recording, book, or film, the content does not change with repeated reception, but the reader does, a fluidity reflected in Hollindale's concept of childness. 'Open' texts grow with the reader revealing multiple meanings when revisited. Such texts may contain fewer typical CMQ attributes; by other cultures or generations they may not even be recognised as 'children's' music. The limitations of the CMQ stem not from the methods of analysis but with the multitude of products that adhere to narrow conceptualisations of childhood. The ubiquity of the Romantic discourse with its roots in concepts of innocence, simplicity, separateness and vulnerability creates 'maddeningly consistent ... and repressive' fayre that continues to constitute acceptable product for children. The CMQ shows how similar to this idealised and distancing construction specific recordings and

broadcasts for children actually were at various socio-historical moments. It reveals how innocent, vulnerable, protected and separated specific societies wanted their children to be.

In order to explore varying constructions of childhood and to begin redressing the imbalance of music in children's media studies, I propose four main contributions that this study makes to the field.

Firstly, through the documentation and analysis of records made for children, I assert that music has as much of a part to play in children's lives as TV, films and digital media. Music is an integral part of these media and helps them to express emotions in non-verbal and non-visual ways thus assisting children to read and perceive the stories that are being told to them and about them.

Secondly, I provide a concrete method to analyse the text of children's records to provide objective judgements about the distinctiveness of children's music and the specific ways in which it differs from that of adults. This provides an insight into the discourses of childhood evident in localised case studies, and builds an understanding of how adults define childhood musically.

Thirdly, the range of case studies and a structuralist approach allows the historicisation of the musical culture of childhood, something sadly missing from existing publications. The abundant examinations of children's literature's Golden Age (the books featuring Alice, the Wizard of Oz, Peter Pan, Mr. Toad, Winnie-the-Pooh) have no equivalent in musicology. A critical analysis of a range of historical texts helps to place modern childhood in context.

Finally, I assert the need for the analysis of contemporary children's music texts to see what they say about children, and how they reflect issues of representation, control, exploitation, and the voices of real children. My final three chapters recognise the commercial scope, power and influence of the children's music industry. My analysis 'lifts the lid' on the messages that song writers and music producers send to children via the medium of children's music. Offering critical assessment on such matters helps to frame and potentially influence the policy

decisions, regulatory impositions, licensing agreements and transmedial deals that proliferate around children and their musical culture.

The overall aim is to highlight the shifting constructions of childhood over time and in a range of geographical areas (mainly the U.K., U.S.A. and Japan) by analysing recordings made for children. The recordings sampled span over a century; the songs contained in them far longer. The eight chapters are arranged in roughly chronological order to allow comparisons of the music and childhoods from the 1940s through to the present day. Secondly, the study aims to uncover the durability of particular discourses of childhood. Specific paradigms seem particularly persistent while others wax and wane in their influence, taking centre stage before retreating to the wings before returning for a series of encores.

The next chapter examines the work of Woody Guthrie and the recordings he made for children in the 1940s. His songs are perceived as being particularly childlike. Yet a closer examination of the recordings and the circumstances surrounding their production raises a series of pertinent questions about adults and children as collaborators in the creation of children's music, the representation of children within such texts, and the contributions they make to discourses of childhood.

Chapter Two

'Why couldn't the wind blow backwards?': The (im)possibility of Woody Guthrie's songs for children

Bold statements about the inherent impossibility of children's culture highlight the problems that children's song writers have when representing children in their work and addressing audiences of 'real' children. Difficulties arise from 'childhood'; the ever-shifting adult construction that living, breathing children have to inhabit, negotiate, resist and generally 'deal with' in their relationships with grown-ups, other children and the wider world. Jacqueline Rose describes 'the impossible relation between the adult and the child' in children's fictional literature caused by the insurmountable 'rupture between writer and addressee' (1984, pp. 58-59). Rose's view of childhood is informed by Romantic ideals of innocence, protection and separation espoused by Locke, Rousseau, Blake, Wordsworth, and others. This chapter examines the children's songs of Woody Guthrie in an attempt to critique and ultimately reject Rose's provocative claims. In many ways, Guthrie's albums for children provide a stark contrast to the overwhelming majority of children's songs that largely rely on the particular construction of childhood invoked by Rose. Rather than impossible compositions devoid of real children, nostalgic recreations of a mythologised lost childhood, or assemblages of innocence and vulnerability, Guthrie's songs for children are resonant with the voices, rhythms and 'lived' lives of living, breathing children. Furthermore, the creation of the albums was assisted in a substantial way by Guthrie's three-year-old daughter Cathy Ann⁷ who was not only the inspiration for her father's children's songs, she was a co-writer, lyricist, collaborator and muse. Her contributions to the thirty-four songs on *Songs to grow on for mother and child*⁸ and *Nursery days*⁹ (both on Folkways Records) offer a fascinating insight into children's creativity whilst raising important issues about the

⁷ Cathy Ann was born in 1943, Guthrie's fourth child of eight.

⁸ Originally released as *Work Songs to Grow On* in 1947 on Folkways Records.

⁹ Recorded in 1946-7 and released in 1956 on Folkways Records.

nature of children's music, and the packaging and framing of dominant ideologies of childhood.

Whilst capturing the immediacy of these intergenerational compositions on tape for public consumption raises issues of media reception and implied readership, Guthrie's children's songs reveal something about the richness, routines and reality of real children's lives, and the complexity, spontaneity and uniqueness of specific childhoods. I discuss the unusual circumstances behind the creation of Guthrie's children's songs and, with reference to the issues of working in an age-specific genre raised by Rose, Nodelman *et al*, seek to explore how child composers and childlike adults might subvert children's music.

From the earliest days of recording, folk music has been one of the two most popular genres of children's music (music hall is the other) and continues to provide a popular soundtrack for the entertainment, education and edification of children (Bickford, 2012, pp. 417-418).

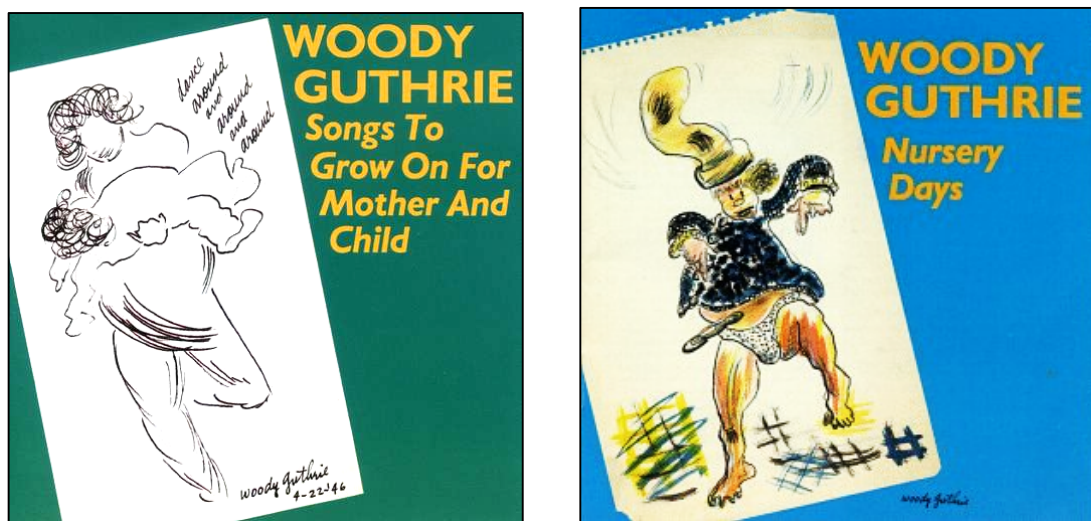


Figure 1

Guthrie's cover art for Songs to grow on for mother and child (1947) and Nursery Days (1956)

The songs of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Lead Belly, Tom Paxton, Malvina Reynolds, Peter, Paul and Mary, Donovan, Raffi, Ewan McColl, and other folk artists are staples of singing sessions in schools, summer camps, churches, and scouting and guiding organisations around the world. This chapter seeks to explain the

enduring link between folk and childhood by drawing on the concepts of innocence and simplicity embedded in the Romantic discourse. Analysis of Guthrie's and other folk songs for children¹⁰ using the Children's Music Quotient (CMQ) places them on a spectrum of childness. Childness is also used to examine Guthrie 'the man', his behaviour, language, writings and art at the time. Through contextual analysis and a structuralist approach, I argue that the childness of his recordings and behaviour were influenced by very particular biographic circumstances. Again, I aim to challenge the impossibility of children's culture that Rose described in her critique of *Peter Pan*. Rather than the work of innocent, asexual perma-children, 'fixed' by the desire of adults (Rose, 1984, p. 60) in a lost world of childhood, Woody and Cathy Ann's creations simmer with a worldliness that frames them both in the chaotic, messy, sexualised age-shared experiences of everyday life. Rather than there being 'no child behind the category "children's fiction"', (Rose, 1984, p. 65), Guthrie's work, whilst being recognisable as 'children's music' (the CMQ helps to identify the musical and lyrical tropes), reveals actual children as the subjects, audience and creators. Indeed, my conversations with Cathy's younger sister Nora Guthrie, revealed the part the songs played in the daily lives of the children that they often documented. Whilst being musical exemplars of children's music,¹¹ the Guthrie's collaborative creations dissolve the power relationships inherent in the substantiation of childhood as a discourse, and span Rose's unbridgeable gulf through the involvement of real, identifiable children.

The historic subordination of the disparate individuals and diverse communities that comprise 'children' and 'the folk' involves specious ideas about authenticity, categorisation and control (Jordanova, 1989, in Gittins, 2004, p. 36). Guthrie's children's songs reveal how these hegemonic representations are subverted from within both folk music and children's culture.

¹⁰ Folk songs, such as Ed McCurdy's anti-war anthem 'Last night I had the strangest dream' (1955), Malvina Reynolds' critique of American suburbia 'Little Boxes' (written 1962, first recorded 1963 by Pete Seeger) and Pete Seeger's Civil Rights song 'If I had a hammer' (written 1949, first recorded 1962) have made their way into the school song books of Western children since their publication.

¹¹ Guthrie's children's albums outsold his adult recordings in the 1940s and 1950s (Klein, 1980, p. 312), and continue to do so in the CD and download age (Place, 2012) raising further questions about age-categorisation and implied audiences.

2.1 Authenticating 'the folk' and 'childhood'

The enduring and symbiotic relationship between 'the folk' and 'childhood' in children's music is a result of similarly-ideological constructions of both groups. Innocence and simplicity, projected through aural signifiers of benign nature, have created one of childhood's most durable soundtracks. Post-Enlightenment philosophers (most notably Rousseau), Romantic poets and liberal, New Testament-focussed Christian scholars have all associated children with a bucolic view of nature, whilst fifteenth-century Renaissance Italian painters depicted the holiness and innocence of Christ using symbols such as the lamb¹² and the apple.¹³ Portraits of children in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries frequently used 'natural' settings such as fields, parks and gardens, whilst young animals often accompanied the children in the portraits. The pastoral, rural idyll framed in the Romantic discourse persisted into the Golden Age of children's literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stories such as *Swallows and Amazons* (1930-47) by Arthur Ransom, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) by Kenneth Grahame, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) by A.A. Milne and *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett feature rural settings and secret worlds in which the ideas of separation, and of childhood innocence are explored. Thus, through a complex discursive process involving religious teaching, philosophical writing, art, literature, a still-resonant ideology of childhood associates children with nature. Power relationships have naturalised these ideologies, imbuing them with authenticity. Symbiotically, folk culture has contributed to the construction of the Romantic child through its evocation of a communal culture, the importance of tradition, and rural imagery. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, folk as an oral culture was perceived to be disappearing due to rapid industrialisation and a corresponding growth in urban living. As a result, folk songs and dances were transcribed, performed and recorded by concerned individuals, collectors, archivists, academics and specialist societies. The vast majority of these collectors were educated, urban and middle class. As such, their categorising, archiving and authentication involved judgments of value.

¹² The lamb is a Christian symbol of innocence, purity and goodness. Christ was 'the lamb of God'.

¹³ Although the fruit itself is not explicitly stated in the Bible, the apple has come to represent the 'forbidden fruit' in the Garden of Eden.

Storey suggests that 'the intellectual cult of the rural folk was a nostalgic fantasy of a time when working people recognized their inferiority and acknowledged due deference to their social superiors' (2003, p. 14). Before their culture was 'discovered' by collectors, 'the folk' did not consider themselves nor their songs and dances worthy of academic study. As a result, they began to become aware of what it meant to be a member of this subordinate group. This 'consciousness of status' is inherent in childhood and informs children's understanding of what it means to be a child. Burke describes the change in attitude of the educated classes thus:

In 1500, they despised the common people, but shared their culture. By 1800 [they] had ceased to participate spontaneously in popular culture, but were in the process of rediscovering it as something exotic and therefore interesting¹⁴.

(Burke in Storey, 2003, p. 4)

Folk music collectors such as Bishop Thomas Percy (*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765), Francis James Child (*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, colloquially known as *The Child Ballads*, 1857 to 1898), John Broadwood, Sabine Baring-Gould and others focussed on compiling tales and ballads. Musicians recreating these tunes commented that they were 'musically wrong' and that, for example, the flat seventh 'never was, and never *could* be!' (Lee, 1982, p. 30). In 1898, the *Folk Song Society* was founded by opera composer and Principal of Hampstead Conservatoire, Cecil James Sharp. Sharp collected and transcribed folk songs and dances from England and, later, the Appalachian Mountains, adding piano parts to songs that had been traditionally unaccompanied. He also toned down the bawdiness in the lyrics, cleansing them of sexual and other 'adult' subject matter deemed unsuitable for Victorian children (Lee, 1982, p. 31). Prominent members of the Folk-Lore Society (formed in 1878) such as Sir Edward Burnet Taylor and Richard Dorson strove to locate an older, more 'savage' and primitive culture in the songs and customs of the 'peasants' of Victorian Britain (Storey, 2003, p. 7).

¹⁴ Ironically, the disappearance of the 'authentic' and 'exotic' urban working class culture of music hall in the late 1800s and early 1900s sparked a similar lament from the educated classes. The next chapter describes the enduring influence of music hall on children's culture. Chapter four looks specifically at the use of the songs and format of music hall on *The Muppet Show*.

Folk-Lore Society members such as Ralph Vaughan Williams are quoted as being excited to find 'ghosts' of 'barbarian' traces in their ethnographic studies of the 'rustic' culture of the 'common people'. In 1902, at the peak of urbanisation, Wordsworth wrote in his *Pre-face to Lyrical Ballads* that 'low and rustic life' and 'a state of greater simplicity' were the best ways to critique the 'mass culture' of an increasingly industrialised society. Rural life and the stability and simplicity it offered was seen as a link to a purer, more primitive pre-historic culture, in opposition to the complex artifice of modern urban life.

In 1932, American folk music archivists John A. Lomax and his son Alan began collecting songs that would become the *Archive of American Folk Song*. Seeking to uncover an American folk tradition differentiated from imported British ballads, they used portable equipment to record mainly African-American music from the rural Southern States. It is important to note that the Lomaxes collected recordings rather than manuscripts. John Lomax was told 'what the Library wants is the machine's record of Negro singing, and not some musician's interpretation of it' (Filene, 2000, p. 56). The work of the Lomaxes greatly influenced the resurgence of interest in folk music in the mid twentieth century. Unsurprisingly, the Lomax's views altered the music made by the performers they had 'discovered' (Filene, 2000, p. 5). Purity and simplicity became prized attributes, characteristics against which all folk musicians were to be judged. Their promotion of Lead Belly in particular focussed on exploiting his 'Otherness', presenting him as a 'savage primitive'; elusive evocations of authenticity stemmed from how well the singer could mirror the Lomaxes' strict codes.

Other ethnomusicologists saw the political power of the folk music. Charles Seeger collected folk songs whilst teaching music at Berkeley, the Julliard School in New York and UCLA (Dunaway, 1981, p. 28). A classically trained composer, Seeger was part of The Composers' Collective, a subset of the progressive left-thinking Workers Music League active through the early 1930s. Rather than promoting traditional folk songs, which were seen as 'politically unaware' and 'musically simple minded', The Collective composed their own with the intention of inspiring the working classes into revolutionary activity (Filene, 2000, p. 69). Meetings with actual folk singers

such as Aunt Molly Jackson prompted incomprehension on both sides. Later, changes in Communist party doctrine brought renewed interest in the songs of 'the people', whilst simplicity and directness were prized to encourage mass participation (Filene, 2000, p. 70). Urban white intellectuals saw Southerners such as Lead Belly and Woody Guthrie as exemplars of the party's vision of a united proletariat joined in song, and traditional working class values. For the artists, remaining true to these enforced expectations of authenticity whilst attempting to court wider appeal required them to balance these contradictory impulses

2.2 The childness of Woody Guthrie's songs for children

Any fool can make something complicated. It takes a genius to make it simple.

(Woody Guthrie, liner notes of *Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child*, 1947)

Interest in Guthrie's life and work has been bolstered by centennial celebrations of his birth, the efforts of the Woody Guthrie Foundation, collaborative song projects such as the *Mermaid Avenue* albums, and the continuing performance of his songs by global superstars such as Bruce Springsteen and Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello. Guthrie was a prolific songwriter¹⁵ as well as a published novelist, radio presenter, composer of lengthy letters, extensive journal writer, accomplished illustrator and visual artist. His best-known work documents the experiences of disenfranchised people from the South and mid-West during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, and highlights the devastating social and political consequences of the Great Depression and World War Two. His songs about greedy bankers, crooked landlords, poverty, unemployment, migrants and refugees have taken on an increased relevance in the twenty-first century. His uncompromising stance adds to his construction as a working-class hero and rebel. However, the songs he wrote for

¹⁵ Guthrie is documented as having written over 3000 songs (Bragg, 2012).

children¹⁶ continue to be popular with pupils, teachers, performers, record buyers and musicians the world over. Despite being excluded from many overviews of his career, consideration of Guthrie's children's songs is essential to a full understanding of him as an artist, parent and human being. The songs reveal much about his ethos of childhood, his views on fatherhood and his attitude to his burgeoning fame. As such they provide a valuable insight into his craft and his creativity.

Guthrie's songs for children are often described as being particularly childlike. Biographer Joe Klein describes them as 'utterly artless ... truly children's songs ... written as children might write them' (1980, p. 312). Journalist Steven Stolder finds the songs 'as spontaneous and nonsensical as baby babble and almost as delightful' (2012) whilst Folkways Records artist Elizabeth Mitchell claims them to be 'simple yet profound ... easy to learn and easy to sing ... and just so darned cute' (2012). Yet 'childlike' in this context refers not to real children but to projections of adults' perception of children. A more useful term, adopted from Hollindale's analysis of children's literature, is 'childness'. Hollindale explains how childness is an identifiable attribute of items of children's culture as well as being something that defines children's relationship with the text (1997, p. 47).

To Elizabeth Mitchell, Guthrie has an 'uncanny ability to inhabit both the perspective of a loving, protective parent and the voice of a freewheeling child' (2012). His songs, it seems, comprise 'seemingly freely-associated words ... natural and effortless melodies ... fragments of sweetness and mystery' and are 'completely unique in their ability to straddle the worlds and views of both caregiver and child' (Mitchell, 2012). I examine how this childness manifests itself in the lyrics and music of Guthrie's children's recordings. Analysis of the texts reveals a looseness, exuberant spontaneity and relative complexity when compared to the children's songs of Pete Seeger, Elizabeth Mitchell and other folk singers. Guthrie seems to

¹⁶ Apart from the thirty-four songs on *Nursery days* and *Songs to grow on*, Guthrie recorded other songs for children including 'Ship in the sky', 'My little seed', 'All work together' and 'Rubber Dolly'. 'Mail myself to you' was performed, but not recorded by Guthrie. Other songs such as 'Dry bed' have been set to music by later artists (in this case Billy Bragg) from Guthrie's original lyric sheets.

have captured on record some of the unstructured, unresolved, unselfconscious world-view of real children.

2.3 Guthrie's 'simple' songs

I've been making up songs ... for twenty years, and Cathy at nearly four years can out rhyme, out play me, out sing me, any old day.

(Guthrie's liner notes to *Nursery Days*)

His music is deceptively simple.

(Pete Seeger, 1967, in Guthrie, 2012)



Figure 2

Woody Guthrie playing music for children

Superficially, Guthrie's children's songs have an inherent simplicity which has allowed the successful transmission of his work across cultures and decades. Despite being a competent musician and multi-instrumentalist (Linford, 2011), Guthrie rarely used more than three chords (specifically the I, IV and V major chords). The songs make frequent use of nonsense lyrics and wordplay common to nursery rhymes. Rhyme, alliteration, assonance and the repetition of words, sounds, lines and sections are common. The songs generally have short overall melodic vocal ranges of around a fifth or a sixth (sometimes less), and simple

structures (such as AB or AA). Vocal melodies are clear and uncluttered, and are clearly audible in the recordings, whilst the lyrics focus on the everyday activities of children. Yet, a closer analysis reveals a complexity that is at odds with the simplicity of the Romantic child, and its influence on the children's music market as it developed through the mid twentieth century. Rose (1984), Honeyman (2005), Nodelman (2008) and others have discussed the difficulties of addressing real children through children's culture and the constant presence (however well hidden) of the adult author. Guthrie's songs for children expose both the complexity of real children and the expectations embedded in reductive discourses of the Romantic childhood. The songs have a spontaneous nursery rhyme quality, full of nonsense and references to specific children and their everyday activities. However, the outward charm masks a rhythmic and musical complexity that is rarely, if ever, replicated in the versions of Guthrie's songs recorded by other artists. Indeed, it seems that the more commercial the intensions, the less similar to Guthrie's original version the songs becomes.

School songbooks containing Guthrie's children's songs use musical notation to communicate the melodies, harmonies and lyrics. However, this visual representation captures nothing of the animated vocal and wilful instrumental delivery evident on Guthrie's recordings. Like the manipulation of the folk collectors, Guthrie's songs have been 'corrected' and simplified during transcription. This taming process has contributed to their successful circulation as acceptable and manageable cultural items and, as such has been necessary for their widespread appeal. Exposure to simplified and standardised music contributes to children's sense of their own status, and ultimately to their separateness from the relative complexity of adulthood. Analysis of the musical, lyrical, sonic and contextual factors of Guthrie and his children's songs reveals high levels of childness, exemplified, in the first instance, by his use of nonsense.

2.3.1 Guthrie's nonsense

Nonsense rhymes have been identified in ethnographic studies of children's folk music (Shehan, 1987) and playground songs (Hopkin, 1984). The general purpose of nonsense is to invert meaning (Hofstadter, 1985, p. 222), deconstructing normative discourses and to generally 'muddle things up' (Tigges, 1987, p. 148). Children's books of the Romantic era were largely absent of nonsense, satire and other subversive devices; innocence and sincerity dominated (Richardson, 1990, p. 124). Nonsense tends towards one of two forms: 'high-brow' literary manipulations, as exemplified by 'Golden Age' children's authors (Hofstadter, 1985, p. 214), and nursery rhyme-style gobbledegook. The former is characterised by highlighting formal features of language (lineation, meter, homophones); the latter by high degrees of syllabic repetition, prolific use of alliteration and assonance, and the employment of invented words that are, at times, onomatopoeic. Both rely on the author's skills with the formal rules of grammar and the reader's competence in registering when and how they have been broken. Successful nonsense must balance the 'contradiction between over-structuring and de-structuring' and 'subversion and support' (Lecerclé, 1994, p. 3). 'Even in the wildest flights of nonsense' it requires a 'strict use of already patterned material' (Benjamin Wharf, 1956, in Tigges 1987). Perhaps more than any of the other children's artists covered in this thesis, Guthrie's use of nursery rhyme-style nonsense is the most extensive,¹⁷ because, I would argue, his ability to manipulate words was exemplary, as evidenced by considerable experience as a novelist, radio broadcaster, newspaper columnist and prolific letter writer.

Examples of the nonsense in Guthrie's children's songs include:

Jiggy, jiggy bum bum and hey piggy run run.

(*'Jiggy Jiggy Bum'*, 1956)

¹⁷ He also included a good deal of nonsense in his many long letters. After his first glimpse through the hospital room window, Woody wrote a seventy-page letter to daughter Cathy that included: 'I WANTED TO LISTEN TO YOU GUGGLE AND GOOGLE AND GURGLE AND GEEGLE AND SQUEAK AND SPEAK AND TALK AND SAY ALL KINDS OF GROWED UP WORDS IN YOUR BABY LANGUAGE' (emphasis in the original, in Klein, 1980, p. 254).

Blubber and a blubber and I bubble my gum.
A bleeber and a blabber and I bubble my gum.
(‘Bubble Gum’, 1956)

Birdy, bird bird. Fly, fly, fly.
Nesty, nest nest. High high high.
(Grassy Grass Grass, 1947)

Guthrie's brand of nonsense is similar in tone to the ‘baby talk’, ‘motherese’, or infant-directed (ID) speech described in the introductory chapter. The verses of ‘Don't you push me down’ (1956), for example, feature two five-syllable lines followed by two of six syllables:

You can play with me.
You can hold my hand.
We can skip together,
Down to the pretzel man.

Each syllable of this verse falls on regular quaver beats with a sufficient pause of three quavers to clearly differentiate each phrase. ‘Sleep eye’ (1956) contains even shorter phrases, this time of three syllables (‘Go to sleep’), each repeated three times separated by a crotchet, followed by a five-syllable phrase:

Go to sleep. Go to sleep.
Go to sleep-y little sleep eye.
Close the eye. Close the eye.
Close-y eye my little sugar.

Guthrie's clear differentiation of the phrases, and his use of some of the tropes of ID speech, such as the crotchet gaps between each phrase, and the simplicity of the grammar, contrasts with songs such as ‘1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8’ (1947) where he delivers a slew of nonsense syllables and stream-of-consciousness images at high tempo.

The only brief pauses for breath occur on the occasional quaver rests between pairs of lines:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,
A, B, C, D, E, F, G.

Hoodoo, voodoo, seven, twenty-one, two,
 Haystack, hoe-stack, hey do the hoe-ta,
 High boga, low joker, ninety-nine, a zero,
 Sidewalk, streetcar, dance a goofy dance.
 Blackbird, blue jay, one, two, three, four,
 Trash-stack, jump back, E, F, G.
 Big man, little man, fat man, skinny man,
 Grasshopper, green snake, hold my hand.¹⁸

Ease of remembrance and vocal participation are important factors to consider when writing anthemic folk or pop songs. The closer a song resembles ID speech, the more likely it seems to remain in the public consciousness and transcend cultures, especially those relying predominantly on oral transmission, such as that of young children. The popularity of Guthrie's songs has benefitted from a good deal of oral transmission. Artists such as Pete Seeger, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Bob Dylan learned them from the man himself. Guthrie sold very few records in his lifetime¹⁹ so instant impact and ease of remembrance were key to their transmission and proliferation in folk circles and beyond. As seen below, the fallibility of oral transmission may account for some of the lyrical and musical differences in subsequent recorded versions. I suggest that Guthrie's best known children's songs 'Put your finger in the air' and 'Riding in my car (Car song)' have required manipulations by other artists to make them closer resemble ID speech patterns. Memorable, anthemic songs are comprised of simple melodies, short melodic phrases, have a slow to medium pace with short melodic intervals. They employ occasional long notes of one to two beats making to allow most people to participate vocally whilst their hymnal nature encourages communal singing (Dockray, 2005). ID speech with its short simplified phrasing and use of words of just one or two syllables has many similar features. Memorable pop songs often feature the predominant use of the major key, a moderate tempo, a symmetrical

¹⁸ The transcription of these lyrics proved difficult for children's performer Elizabeth Mitchell who claims to have spent days deciphering them (2012). Jeff Place's single omission to his transcribed lyrics for Guthrie's *Nursery Days* is '1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8', presumably for the same reasons.

¹⁹ Place points out that it would have taken a few years to sell a thousand copies of one of Guthrie's albums, and that few, if any, of his other titles would have reached that figure during the 1940s and 1950s. Sales of Guthrie's two children's CDs through the Smithsonian Folkways website now total 60,000 with very few of Guthrie's or any other Folkways artists' albums selling more than 10,000 copies (Place, 2012). Children's recordings were Folkways' best selling discs and Asch was always keen to curate, rerelease and promote them as technology and recording formats advanced (Place, 2012).

form and lyrics in the first person that make frequent use of rhyme and assonance (Hyde, 1999). Many of Guthrie's children's songs conform to these definitions; their ease of remembrance makes them ideal for oral transmission. Many feature high levels of repetition of individual syllables and consecutive words. 'Yellow Crayon' (1947) is an exemplar:

Yellow, yellow, yellow, my yellow crayon,
Yellow, yellow, yellow, my yellow crayon,
Yellow, yellow, yellow, my yellow crayon,
Yellow, yellow, yellow, my yellow crayon.

'My Little Seed' (1956) combines nonsense language, perfect rhyme and high degrees of alliteration with repetition:

Tooky, tooky, tooky, tooky, tidalo,
Tooky, tooky, tooky, tooky, tidalo,
Tooky, tooky, tooky, tooky, tidalo,
We'll all dance around and see my little seed grow.

Some of Guthrie's songs, such as 'My Dolly' (1956) are strophic in their design using repetition of key phrases with additive difference:

I put my dolly's dress on,
I put my dolly's pants on,
I put my dolly's hat on,
And she looks like this.

My dolly talks for me, me
My dolly walks for me, me
When dolly walks and talks, oh well
She looks like this.

My dolly she can sing, sing.
My dolly she can dance, dance.
When dolly sings and dances.
Well, she looks like this.

As a skilled songwriter, Guthrie understood that ease of remembrance is greatly aided by a familiar melody; he borrowed from songs with which many of his audience would have been familiar. His 'This land is your land' uses a melody from a

Carter Family song,²⁰ whilst many of his children's songs use melodies found in his adult repertoire.²¹ His crafted use of nonsense produces an 'open' text resistive of 'top-down' attribution of meaning. His use of ID speech patterns aids memorability, essential in a largely oral tradition. As seen below, his use of the child as narrator is a strong signifier of Guthrie's intentions to create music with children as an intended audience.

2.4 The child narrator and the hidden adult

I don't want the kids to be grownup. I want to see the grown folks
be kids.

(Guthrie's liner notes to *Nursery Days*, 1956)

The narrative mode of children's songs raises issues about the representation of children and reveals much about the adult behind the text. The majority of Guthrie's songs for children have child narrators and are delivered in the first person. They focus on the themes of childhood (bathing, feeding, rattling, dollies, crayons, bubble gum) from a child's perspective. A smaller number of the songs are explicitly from an adult perspective containing instructions directed at children. This issue of focalisation has significant influence on how a text is received. Readers positioned 'inside the text' (Barthes' 'readerly text') are vulnerable to being manipulated and may find it difficult to adopt more than one point of view (Stephens, 1992, p. 4). This is constructed, in part, by the role and tone of the narrator. An all-knowing 'adult' narrator may exert maximum control over the reader (Stephens, 1992, p. 56), whilst a narrative delivered in the first person, either by a child or an adult, may evoke the sympathy of the reader, depending on a host

²⁰ Guthrie's best known song 'This land is your land' resembles ID speech with regular lines of five syllables clearly separated by a crotchet beat, the strong crotchet and quaver meter being repeated throughout the song. The song is an adaptation of the Carter Family's 'When the World's on fire', which in turn was based on the Baptist hymn 'Oh, my loving brother'. When Moe Asch recorded 'This Land is Your Land' in 1944, he saw its potential as a children's song and included it on the 1951 Folkways release *Songs to Grow On: This Land Is My Land*, the first time it was ever released as a recording (Mitchell, 2012).

²¹ The verses of 'Bubble Gum' and 'Jiggy Jiggy Bum' for example, have the same music as 'This land is your land' while 'Why, Oh Why?' shares the same tune as his adult 'More pretty girls than one'.

of extraneous factors such as the reader's competence, the context and the relation to any accompanying material.

During his periods of leave from the Merchant Marines,²² Guthrie was a doting father actively involved in the day-to-day upbringing of his daughter. He kept copious notes and diary entries that documented the activities and routine rituals of Cathy (and later his son Arlo).²³ He collected and catalogued her drawings, and rhymes, transcribing many of her conversations verbatim (Klein, 1980, p. 311 and p. 332) which served as inspiration for, and the lyrics of his songs. In most songs, Woody sings to and about Cathy, her world and her friends, vocalising words that were either created or directly inspired by her. However, whilst the child in this case is not constructed but real, closer analysis begins to reveal the adult sensibilities behind the construction of the songs and the ways in which projections of innocence and simplicity manifest themselves.

Mealtimes, bath times, bedroom routines and the everydayness of life with young children are typical topics for Guthrie. He seems acutely aware of his domestic situation and of his new role as an active participant in these chores.

Mamma, o, mamma, come wash my face.
Wash my face, come wash my face.
Mamma, o, mamma, come wash my face.
And make me nice and clean-o.
(‘Clean-o’, 1957)

The child narrators of Guthrie's songs frequently request the routine activities that adults would consider good for them. The protagonists extol the importance of waking up, getting dressed, exercising, getting and keeping clean, interacting with adults, playing with animals and other children before going to sleep with the help of a loving adult. The baby/child narrator of ‘I want my milk’ (1946) makes repeated requests to suck on bottles and nipples (‘I want them now!’) and seems to understand the positive benefits of bath time, cod liver oil and vitamin drops. In the

²² He joined the Marines in 1943, the year that Cathy was born.

²³ As early as 1942, Guthrie proposed to write songs for children and spent some time notating the speech of the children he met on the street (Klein, 1980, p. 249).

insistence on routine, healthy eating, cleanliness and an early night, the hidden adult emerges from the shadows. The child listener detects that life is comprised of routine activities, and that the adults in their lives desire such routines. The narrator, though usually a child, seems to possess an adult sensibility and understands the benefits of a healthy, sociable life full of loving adults and eager playmates.

'My dolly' (CMQ scores of 83% for Music, 73% for Lyrics, and 33% for Sonics) is perhaps the best example of this projection of adult sentiment. The child-dolly interaction serves as a metaphor for the adult-child relationship. The child leads the dolly through the daytime routine of getting dressed, playing with toys, being sociable and loving her elders before going to sleep ('Dolly says I'm getting tired now. Dolly says I want to lay down'). The merging of the persona, their biography and the words ascribed to the narrator is a key signifier of folk and later rock music. Folk audiences demand high levels of authenticity from their artists; any rupture between the person, the persona and the narrative content of songs raises questions of legitimacy. Perhaps it was the use of the first person narrative mode in Guthrie's children's songs that caused consternation in some of his peers. Those that felt he was losing his sanity and wasting his talent on these songs may have felt more comfortable if the lyrics were in the second person:

You put your dolly's dress on. You put your dolly's pants on...

... or the third person:

She puts her dolly's dress on. She put her dolly's pants on ...

Guthrie is perhaps least hidden as an adult writer in the song 'One day old' where the narrator is a baby. In each verse, the infant describes themselves as an animal (butterfly, kitty cat, chipmunk, doodle-bug) and a variety of endearing terms that adults would use for young children (sugar plum, little angel, sweet thing, cutie pie) as well as explaining their ever-changing age (anything from 'no days old' to 'twenty days old').

'Why, oh why?' is a dialogue song in which Guthrie pitches childlike questions before giving less-than-authoritative responses, thus resisting authorial control and subverting clarity, reason, surety and other tropes of adulthood:

Why don't you answer my questions? Why, oh why, oh why?
'Cause I don't know the answers. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.

What makes the landlord take money? Why, oh why, oh why?
I don't know that one myself. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.

Why ain't my grandpa my grandma? Why, oh why, oh why?
Same reason your dad's not your mommy. Goodbye goodbye goodbye.

Guthrie's use of the child protagonist in the majority of his songs for children is one of the key tropes of children's music. Other signifiers such as 'shorter', 'use active rather than passive voices', 'have a clear-cut moral code' and 'are optimistic rather than pessimistic' may equally be found in texts aimed at adults (McDowell in Holliindale, 1997, p. 39)

The concept of competence suggests that readers of any age may engage with the text in a multitude of ways depending on their proficiency with literary (or in this case musical and aural) codes. A reader with such critical skills is able to make some sense of the nonsensical and identify the rupture between real life and the depiction of that life in song, book or other artistic creation. They may also have the competence to critique that rupture and draw out some of the ideological consequences of such representations in a way that Rose, Nodelman, Honeyman, Hollindale and others have done. Some of those critiques inevitably concern the text's appropriateness for its intended audience. As such it is an adult sensibility that questions how a 'no day old' baby could be singing a song (or have written one in the first place) or how the baby's age changes every few seconds, something that the baby is able to articulate accurately. The inclusion of music (the intertextuality of some of the tunes) and words that might raise consternation (or amusement) in adult listeners alludes to the intergenerationality of some of Guthrie's children's songs. However, I suggest that the references to breasts and 'big nipples, little

nipples, middle-sized nipples, all kind of nipples' in the song 'I want my milk' or the references to starving children, killing hogs with guns, slitting their bellies, or making love to 'my wife' in 'Roll on' and 'Jiggy Jiggy Bum Bum' frame children within a world of adults and help them begin to understand something of that world in a supportive, managed and creative way. Such examples deny the age-exclusivity of music for children and reveal the shared cultural and social space enjoyed by adults and children. This is embedded in the quantitative nature of the CMQ which assesses the size of this space, and the degree and nature of the separateness of children's music, factors reflected in constructions of childhood.²⁴

2.5 Tidying up: Simplifying Guthrie's simple songs

Many of Guthrie's fifty or so recordings for children have been covered by other artists and continue to appear on albums, TV shows, and websites across the world. Two songs in particular have proved extremely popular, namely 'Put your finger in the air' and 'Riding in my car (Car song)'. CMQ analysis suggests that these songs have achieved this popularity, because they exemplify the attributes crucial to the construction of the particular discourse of childhood it measures. However, the two songs have increased in their simplicity and their levels of childness through reiteration by other artists, a change that, I argue, has allowed the songs to survive and thrive on the journey over decades, continents and cultures. Ironically, it is the exuberance and spontaneity of the original recordings that Guthrie made with producer Moe Asch in the mid 1940s that many find endearing, and indeed full of childness. The simpler, tidied up versions by other artists suggest that, in some ways, the unadulterated creativity of 'childlike' adults, like Guthrie, and of real children, is too messy and problematic for the children's music industry. Ultimately, this process reveals more about adults' desire to tidy, discipline and control childhood, than it does about real children. Musical analysis of Guthrie's original

²⁴ Ironically, when Guthrie made his only appearance on the BBC's *Children's Hour* in July 1944, the songs he performed ('Wabash Cannonball', '900 Miles', 'Stagger Lee' and 'Pretty Boy Floyd') were all 'adult' songs.

recordings exposes a complexity that is rarely, if ever, replicated in versions by subsequent artists.

2.5.1 'Riding in my car (Car song)'

An iTunes search (2015) reveals around forty-five different versions of 'Riding in my Car (Car song)'; Spotify hosts a similar number. There are hundreds more versions that have not made it to digital downloading or streaming. The thirteen versions of 'Riding in my car' analysed in this section span the seventy years since Guthrie recorded it (see Appendix 3). Guthrie's recording has the second highest tempo at 130 beats per minute (bpm). He delivers the verses at breakneck speed in an attempt to squeeze the eight syllables into each line. At times, words collide as he races through lines full of vocal sound effects (car horns, engines) and quickly-repeated phrases. He often extends the bar length after the third line, just as the song moves to the IV chord, adding two, three or four beats as he feels he needs them. The average tempo of the non-Guthrie versions is only 112 bpm, the lowest being Steve Waring's at 90 bpm. Adults, it seems, prioritise vocal clarity in children's music. Interestingly, studies of young children have shown that they associate tempo with mood, rather than the tonality of major/minor scales and harmonies (Mote, 2011). The results indicated that four to five year-olds rated fast songs as significantly happier than slow songs.

Guthrie's original version has thirteen verses, the most in the sample. The average of the others is nine with the lowest being just six. Guthrie's original also has the most different verses. For example, Guthrie makes only one pass through the title verse that starts 'Take me riding in the car, car'. There is no attempt to construct a chorus or refrain through repeating a verse. Most of the other versions at least start and finish with the title verse; some use it three, four or even five times. By the early 1960s, Guthrie's peers such as Pete Seeger and Ramblin' Jack Elliott had constructed a chorus from the wordless verse of engine noises ('Brrr brrr brrrr'). Later versions such as the one on *50 Timeless Toddler Tunes* (2010) feature 'real' sampled sound effects and make much of the noises produced by parts of the car.

The songs' narrators and protagonists tend to be adults ('I'll take *you* riding in my *car*'; 'I'm going to let *you* blow the horn') although Guthrie (and subsequently Bob Dylan and David Van Ronk, and Elizabeth Mitchell) begins his version in the first person with a child saying 'Take *me* riding the car'. Donovan highlights the age differential among the passengers by suggesting the 'boys and girls, sing a little song' whilst Pete Seeger diplomatically states 'Let's [let us] go riding in the car'. Before every verse, The Singing Kettle instruct their imagined audience to participate vocally or physically, making their version similar in this sense to other actions songs such as 'The wheels on the bus' or 'Wind the bobbin up'. The safety-conscious *KidsSongs* repeatedly tell their listeners to 'Lock your door and buckle up'. Steve Waring is the only artist to include a line that appears on Guthrie's original lyric sheet, but never made it to his Folkways recording. By telling the children 'if you promise to be real good and not kick all my paint off' it is clear that the adults are in charge. On its historical and cultural journey, 'Riding in my car' has generally become slower, with fewer verses and more of them repeated. The bar lengths have become regular, whilst recorded sound effects have replaced vocals ones. Adult vocalists increasingly make requests for children to join in vocally and physically, whilst creators increasingly believe that their audience needs their music tidier and simpler than children in the 1940s. They need encouragement to participate and prefer realistic sound effects to vocal approximations. As explored in chapters on tween music (chapter six) and the commercialisation of children's music (chapter seven), many children's recordings of the twenty-first century are 'kiddified' in the extreme; clarity and regularity rule. This impossible quest for perfection is a modern music industry trope, exemplified by vocal auto-tuning, and the quantising (the automatic snapping of notes and beats to a rhythmic grid) of computer-generated digital music. Rough edges are smoothed and 'mistakes' automatically rectified in a quest for sonic perfection. On reception, the young implied reader of this aural airbrushing internalises this perfection as part of their schema of listening. These cosmetically-enhanced recordings contribute to children's perceptions of the perfect childhood, one which can never be matched by the messiness and unpredictability of real life, and indeed, in Guthrie's original recordings.

2.5.2 'Put your finger in the air'

The thirty-plus versions of 'Put your finger in the air' on *iTunes* (2015) highlight many of the same changes as 'Riding in my car' in terms of standardising the tempo, bar lengths, rhythms and melodies. Guthrie's original version averages 120 bpm, although he speeds up noticeably throughout the song. The bar lengths between his verses vary considerably and unpredictably, first two beats, then seven, six, and two. All of the other versions have regular bar lengths between the verses, usually of four or eight beats. However, there is one major harmonic change in subsequent versions which fundamentally alters the impact of the song and makes it more child-friendly. Guthrie stays on the tonic chord of E until the end of the second line when he changes to the dominant V chord, in this case a B:

E		
Put your finger in the air, in the air.		
E	B	
Put your finger in the air, in the air.		
E	A	
Put your finger in the air and hold it up right there.		
E	B	E
Put your finger in the air, in the air.		

Pete Seeger, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and subsequent artists rise to the V chord at the end of the first line:

E	B
Put your finger in the air, in the air.	
B7	E
Put your finger in the air, in the air.	

This harmonic change affects the vocal melody considerably; the overall melodic range shrinks from fourteen semitones in Guthrie's version to just ten in subsequent versions, making it easier for children and amateurs to sing. The tonic-dominant (I to V) harmonic relationship is hard-wired into Western diatonic music

and forms a staple of nursery rhymes, and children's songs. In simple terms, more dominant chords (in this case the B chord) followed by root chords (E) gives more pleasurable musical moments for young listeners (Levitin, 2006, p. 125). Seeger's harmonically-altered version has more such moments than Guthrie's original.

Guthrie's other children's songs have not fared so well, having not been covered, interpreted or passed along into the twenty-first century to the same extent. The less-frequently covered Guthrie songs were also not in the recorded repertoire of one key artist, Pete Seeger, who did much to popularise his friend's songs. The changes Seeger made to 'Riding in my car' and 'Put your finger in the air' are significant; he tidied the songs making them clearer, simpler, more palatable for artists and industry, and ensured their endurance in the children's music canon.

2.6 Guthrie's childness

The progressive neurological illness that Guthrie developed around the time of his children's albums contributed his behaviour and hence the childness of his songs. To Logan English, Guthrie was a man who 'remained child-like and forgot about being childish' (1974). Klein notes Guthrie's unpredictable, irrational and often uncontrollable behaviour, describing him as a professional innocent with a childlike quality that was more than just a pose (1980, p. 133). To Klein, Guthrie was an 'an adult child' who 'saw life with a child's clarity and innocence and sometimes behaved like a child' (Klein, 1980, p. 93). Woody was small of stature (around 5'6") with a noted affinity for children²⁵ and an aversion to growing up.²⁶ In the presence of daughter Cathy,²⁷ Guthrie was more like a playmate than a parent. Klein claims that:

His innocence, the childlike quality that all his friends ... had noticed immediately and loved, was more than just a pose – he actually seemed to shed thirty years of experience and see the world as Cathy did; to really understand the danger and

²⁵ 'I always get along best with young kids. They're more my age.' (Guthrie, 1942, in Klein, 1981, pp. 245-6).

²⁶ He suggested to his wife Marjorie 'I will never grow up' (letter dated 1954, in Klein, 1980, p. 273).

²⁷ Guthrie's nicknames for daughter Cathy included Stacky, Stackybones, Stackaroony.

exhilaration of making new discoveries ... the all-encompassing joy of being cuddled and loved ... and, most of all, the bouncy, open rhyminess of being a kid.

(Klein, 1980, p. 311)

As well as choosing a narrative mode of lyrical delivery, children's performers, like any performers, develop a persona through which to work. Auslander (2008) describes how these affect public perceptions of the artist whilst Frith suggests that the real person behind the construct is the least accessible aspect for audiences (in Auslander, 2004, p. 6). Whilst many of Guthrie's friends and associates saw him as naturally childlike, I argue that he was a master manipulator of his performance persona and a skilled, and well-practiced communicator in writing, speech, art and music. Much of his perceived naivety was a crafted construct, developed through years of performing. The neurological illness that Guthrie developed in the 1940s added to this perception, and to the childness of his songs. Childhood draws on notions of children's irrationality, unschooledness and perceived pre-sexuality (Honeyman, 2005, p. 3) and their associations with animals (Nodelman, 2008, p. 19). The construction of Guthrie's childlikeness requires his animalistic, unpredictable, irrational urges, and naïf-like qualities to take priority over adult mores such as his education (formal or otherwise), hard drinking and often-rampant sexuality. Klein makes frequent mention of how Guthrie's woolly hair breaks combs, as well as his unwashed and unkempt appearance, wild and uncontrollable behaviour, tendency for sleeping on floors rather than in beds.²⁸ The animalistic naturalisation of children and folk music captures not only the passivity of the rural idyll, but also the destructive power of mysterious, untameable forces of nature. The spectres of the noble savage and primitivism lurk in the shadowy constructions of the authenticity of folk singers. Biographical accounts of Guthrie as childlike serve to control and limit how he is perceived as an artist. Rather than the unpredictable and sometimes uncontrollable grown man who could express complex situations and emotions with simplicity and clarity in his work, Guthrie is frequently

²⁸ Such as the time he overturned a table of food and drinks at a communist party/society meeting (in Klein, 1980).

infantilised as a naïf. Naturalising his talents in this way downplays his keen intellect, his strong tendency for auto-didacticism and other well-crafted 'adult' skills. It also portrays him as an unknowable Romantic genius rather than a caring father and husband, and well-practiced, creative songwriter. Guthrie was able to consciously employ a feigned ignorance and adopt a childlike performance persona that allowed him to communicate not only to children, but to a wider intergenerational audience. Ironically, this persona became less controllable as time passed; Guthrie's Huntingdon's disease began to manifest itself during the period he was writing songs for children.

2.6.1 Rebellious against rebellion

Woody is just Woody. ... there is nothing sweet about Woody, and there is nothing sweet about the songs he sings.

(John Steinbeck in Klein, 1980, p. 160)

By all accounts, Guthrie was a rebel. He railed against authority and convention, and found it difficult to fully commit to group projects such as the Almanac Singers, preferring to ramble and busk an idiosyncratic and creative path through life. In his younger days, he was notoriously freewheeling, travelling from homes, wives and children seemingly on a whim. He loved women and 'walked around perpetually in heat' (Dunaway, 1981, p. 65). Alan Lomax describes Woody's 'enormous insatiable sexuality ... heavy drinking and smoking and fornicating' (Klein, 1980, p. 417).

Guthrie's folk peers and the wider folk audience loved his music and were attracted by his rebellious stance, yet he could be difficult to work with and was disliked by some (Woody Guthrie Arena Documentary, 1988). Hampton refers to Guthrie as a 'guerrilla minstrel' placing him alongside other musical rebels as John Lennon, Joe Hill and Bob Dylan (1986); Kaufman portrays Guthrie as an 'American radical' (2011). Such mediatisation has contributed to the construction of the Romantic myth of Guthrie as a true folk artist, a prolific solitary genius, authentic in his poverty and spontaneity, anti-establishment in his sentiments and actions.

Yet how much, if at all, did Guthrie have to adapt his performance style to deliver songs for children? And how does his 'children's entertainer' persona fit with the constructions of him as a politicised people's poet and a rambling rebel? Alberti²⁹ describes the 'faux naïf' performance persona whereby through the deliberate use of naivety, ignorance and innocence, the artist can explore and subvert hegemonic ideologies (1999). Guthrie displayed his ability to adopt such a persona whilst writing his regular 'Woody Sez' column in *People's World*, a far left-leaning newspaper. His deliberate use of bad grammar, misspelled words and 'cornball' humour allowed him to address serious political issues in an exaggerated vernacular style. This was also in evidence at the performances and speeches he gave at functions for the Communist Party in New York. I suggest that, like many other writers and performers for children, Guthrie used his well-practiced faux naïf persona in the recording and performance of his children's songs, a device that endeared him to the local children to whom he would perform on the step of his house in Coney Island, and to later generations who continue to consume and perform his songs. Far from the animalistic ingénue, Guthrie was 'an exceptionally thoughtful, considered songwriter' (Linford, 2011) writing songs of deliberate musical and lyrical simplicity, whilst employing a crafted performance style that appealed to children.

I suggest that Guthrie's decision to make music for children was influenced partly by his rebellion against being portrayed as a rebel and his burgeoning messianic status.³⁰ Guthrie's musical progeny Bob Dylan experienced a similar beatification and self-enforced exile in the second half of the 1960s, as did John Lennon in the 1970s. Perhaps Guthrie attempted to deflate his own emerging myth by writing songs for children, a move which caused some of his peers to question his motives and indeed his sanity. Why would such an incisive social commentator waste his

²⁹ Alberti was influenced by Terry Eagleton who adopted Bertolt Brecht's ideas of how amateur acting can cut through the naturalised artificiality of theatre to reveal its constructed nature (in Alberti, 1999). Through the use of deliberately 'bad acting', the 'faux-naïf' can begin to demystify the ideological processes behind theatrical and cultural products and performances.

³⁰ In 1940 whilst working on his Bonneville Power Administration commission in California, Guthrie visited the tents and shacks of the displaced Oklahoma farmers. In a letter to his fellow Almanac Singers in New York, he notes that 'On more than one night, on more than one day, I've heard my Oakie friends ask me, say mister, you don't happen to be Mister Jesus do you?' (Klein, 1980, p. 197).

time on such trivial material? At the very moment when (thanks to Guthrie) the rambling working-class politicised acoustic-guitar-playing folk singer was becoming an authentic role model for hordes of young people, Guthrie turned to children's music, 'an island of innocence and calm in a world that seemed to be growing increasingly hostile toward him' (Klein, 1980, p. 315). Guthrie's employment of a naïf persona appears to be, in part, a conscious rebellion against rebellion. Alberti suggests that children's music promotes 'the ingenuous over the cynical' and 'the playful over the defiant' (1999, p. 175). Guthrie's natural inclination in his adult song writing is not towards cynicism (note Swedland's *This machine kills cynicism*, 2012). It is the directness and simplicity of his vocabulary (both lyrically and musically) that render his songs so powerful. It is his plain-speaking, hillbilly Socratic irony and willingness to engage with political and social concerns head on, rather than through the knowing distance of cynicism, that makes the best of his work so affecting. Rather than the products of a naïve ingénue, I argue that Guthrie's childness has its roots in real life. He was a skilled songwriter and a master manipulator of words revelling in the joy of fatherhood. The spontaneity and simplicity of expression are products of years of practice as a songwriter and author, and his voracious book reading (note Kaufman, in Linford, 2011).

However, for Guthrie, from the mid to late 1940s:

... an odd thing was happening ... with his writing. It was beginning to bulge and warp crazily, like images in a fun-house mirror. In some ways, it seemed a natural progression – or, perhaps, disintegration – from his army letters to his children's songs.

(Klein, 1980, pp. 361-2)

Klein had access to Guthrie's original letters and journals and notes his 'madder, freer style' during this period, which included 'increased rhyminess' and 'prolixity'. By 1951, Guthrie's prose had become 'swirling and vertiginous, a joyous spew of words that strained against all conventions and was, at once, brilliant and quite mad' (Klein, 1980, p. 362). It is probable that at least some of Guthrie's perceived childlikeness stems from the onset of his Huntingdon's disease. The manic creativity, the breakneck and varying tempos, the slurred speech and missed beats

are all symptomatic of the neurological condition with which he was officially diagnosed a few years later.

2.7 Conclusion

Guthrie's creative collaborations with his young daughter close the 'rupture' that Rose perceives between producer and consumer, artist and audience. They do this through a combination of revealing a good deal about the 'hidden adult' and their relationship with real children in the process. However, in this instance, the adult's childlike compositions, and hence the childness of the listening experience are, in part, the result of a neurological condition which stimulated childlike traits. A range of particular and perhaps, peculiar factors combined to produce songs for children that reflect the richness and complexity of children's real life experiences in a verbal and musical language that is accessible in its simplicity, and engaging in its lack of rhythmic, metric, melodic and harmonic discipline.

Through the convergence of the specificity of his subject matter, his meaningful collaboration with his daughter, his well-developed skills as a songwriter and performer, his reflections on his own childhood (far from Rousseau-like), his rebellious personality and his rapidly developing illness, Guthrie created songs that, whilst being recognisable as children's songs (CMQ analysis), demythologise children and childhood in their documentation of routine domesticity. By modern day standards, Guthrie's children's recordings are rough and ready, yet they remain potent, standing in stark contrast to the recent synthesised, sanitised, auto-tuned productions examined in chapters five, six, and seven. Rather than the highly-regulated and audibly-simplified products that often pass for children's music, Guthrie's songs for children breath with the messiness of actual children, the exuberance of a busy household and the dynamics of real life. Cathy died at five years old in the house in which she and her family lived.³¹ Yet her words and spirit

³¹ Cathy's dress was set alight by the faulty wiring of the radio in the Guthrie house.

are alive through the continued popularity of her father's music and the songs she inspired.

Rather than the high levels of childness in author, reader and text of Guthrie's children's songs, and in many folk songs for children, the next chapter explores the consequences on children's reception when certain parts of the text have much lower levels of childness, and perhaps none at all. The case studies explore different ways in which adult sensibility informs texts for children without tending toward either highly Romantic notions or relying on substantial levels of childness. The significance of the 'adultisation' of children's music is discussed in relation to the various discourses of childhood detailed in chapter one. An exploration of music hall highlights how an intergenerational music culture emerged under the same cultural conditions as modern childhood and its commercial exploitation by adults.



Figure 3

*Cathy Ann and Woody on the beach outside their house,
3520, Mermaid Avenue, Coney Island, N.Y.*

Chapter Three

‘We’re in the same boat brother’: Expressions of adulthood in songs for children

Even a cursory investigation of children’s records unearths a good deal of ‘adult’ content. Lullabies, nursery rhymes, folk music and songs from a broad range of origins contain themes that deal with concerns that are, on the whole, absent from the Romantic construction of childhood innocence. This chapter investigates three instances where, in different ways, aspects of adult life are shared with the child listener and some of the ‘secrets’ of adulthood revealed. As in other chapters, these case studies are used to assess what specific records, genres, TV shows, or musical practices say to and about children in specific contexts and how they contribute to particular types of childhood discourse. The over-riding question that this chapter asks concerns the concept of childhood innocence and its absence. What happens when, in texts that are labelled as being ‘for children’ or those that have come to be closely associated with childhood, perceived innocence is diminished, critiqued, subverted or even eradicated completely? Whilst dyadic representations of childhood allow the rapid and clear identification of good or evil, innocence or knowingness, adulthood or childhood, this chapter (and selected other case studies throughout) considers how records and musical culture contribute to discourses that conceive of children as members of families and wider communities, as consumers, workers, viewers and active participants. I contend that considerations of children as ‘knowing’ agents, capable of unravelling something of the goings-on of the wider world and deciphering some of the clues left to them by adults breeds an inclusive ethos in which children are not excluded from the world of adults.

Specifically, this chapter investigates nursery rhymes and fairy tales which, due to their origins in before modern conceptions of childhood innocence, still retain much ‘adult’ content and represent universal ‘truths’ about life. Three divergent examples of folk music songs for children (by a white American, an African-American, and a British duo) offer conceptions of childhood that contrast with the immediacy of the family setting and the father/daughter collaborations offered by Woody Guthrie in

the last chapter. Again, the roots of many of the songs, and of the genre itself, predate constructions of western childhood and therefore offer respite from music with high levels of childness explored in chapter seven and elsewhere.

Significant consideration is given in this chapter to the role of the songs and culture of music hall and their substantial impact on children's records to this day. The aim is not only to investigate the links between the birth of music hall and the birth of particular discourses of childhood, but to assess the social, industrial and political conditions by which music hall became connected to discourses of children as consumers via the commercialisation of children's entertainment in the Victorian era, discourses that resonate in the twenty-first century and that are examined more fully in the following chapters.

The dearth of study on 'adultised' songs for children is unsurprising; in a context where childhood innocence and all of the consequences of that conception are largely effaced, childhood as a separate category is eradicated. In such faint and blurry discourses, children are to a large extent invisible. So it is no wonder that children's music with low levels of childness, such as some of the songs of Raffi, Donovan's children's records or much of the Muppets' musical oeuvre evades investigation by children's media scholars. It is simply not 'special' or distinct enough and lacks 'experiential uniqueness' (Hollindale, 1997, p. 10). However, whilst this chapter highlights the fact that many of the 'adult' themes are 'hidden' from children through literary cloaking devices such as satire, irony, metaphor and double entendre, they are detectable to competent child readers. I propose a 'music hall formula' (p. 95) as a way of describing the combination of 'adult' themes with music that often has significant amounts of childness. This formula is evident not only in the songs of music hall and the children's records that pastiche original music hall compositions, but in other genres such as folk and tween. I assert that such songs empower children on their stuttering journey towards adulthood by giving them accessible and realistic representations of the adolescents they will become, and manageable visions of adulthood with all of the sex, blood and guts that this implies.

3.1 Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhymes are among the first songs that young children hear. Passed down in something approaching an oral tradition through generations of parents, carers and nursery (kindergarten) staff, the songs are potentially the sub-genre of children's music most associated with children, especially young children. Musical analysis of well-known nursery rhymes suggests that their level of childness is high (Appendix 4), yet the lyrics contain a range of subject matter that documents the lives of adults, rather than children. This brief investigation of some of the more 'adult' nursery rhymes highlights how they provide an age-inclusive forum for 'real life' issues; as texts, they do not separate childhood as a closed and exclusive world with its own rules, customs and culture. The study also reveals this thesis' wider theme of how music rather is a stronger factor in defining children's music than lyrics.

Key studies of nursery rhymes have been conducted by DeSantis (1986), Kenney (2005) and Roberts (2005). All concentrate on the words and the themes rather than the melodies and other musical factors. Highlighting their developmental role in children's lives, Kenney suggests that the rhythms, rhymes and structures of nursery rhymes are the foundation for learning language and more complex music (2005, p. 28). Like Hopkin (1984), Roberts notes the oral processes by which such rhymes have circulated in populations with a high degree of illiteracy (2005, p. xv). Whilst many of the original meanings have faded over time, they retain a range of political, profane, sexual and other 'adult' themes. 'London Bridge is Falling Down' and 'The Grand Old Duke of York' describe actual events (Roberts, 2005, p. 92 and p. 44), whilst 'Georgy Porgy' and 'Little Jack Horner' were composed as political satire (*ibid.*, p. 71 and p. 1). Themes of loneliness and sexual frustration seem common; 'Old Mother Hubbard' longs for a 'bone' in her cupboard (DeSantis, 1986, p. 622) whilst 'Rub a Dub Dub' documents separation from home, voyeurism and masturbation (*ibid.*, pp. 607-8; Roberts, 2005, p. 20). 'Three Blind Mice' alludes to the castration of three young farm hands sexually attracted to the farmer's wife (DeSantis, 1986, p. 624). 'Goosie, Goosie, Gander' alludes to prostitution and venereal disease (Roberts, 2005, pp. 23-26) whilst 'Oranges and Lemons' was a wedding night rhyme that concludes with the lines 'Here comes a candle to light

you to bed. Here comes a chopper to chop off your [maiden] head' (Roberts, 2005, p. 60).

The continued circulation of such ribald rhymes stems from their ability to 'link the playful and the profound' (Gollapudi, 2004, p. 123) whilst 'fulfilling a psychological need of children and their parents' (DeSantis, 1986, p. 604). Historically, it was young, single, female kindergarten staff who had the task of selecting and reading these rhymes; tales of courtship, bodily changes and sexuality resonated with their worldview. Many of the original rhymes were toned down especially during the Victorian era revealing the protectionist ethos of Romantic discourses of childhood (Roberts, 2005, p. xv). The degree to which adults bowdlerise these themes for young ears says more about adult morality and the over-riding cultural and political norms of the day than it does about children's agentic abilities to interpret specific texts embedded within specific social networks and use them to grow. One of Hollindale's questions about the nature of children's literature is 'what taboos *are* observable in a given children's text, and what forms of linguistic or narrative circumlocution and evasion are employed to keep them sacrosanct?' (1997, p. 94). DeSantis highlights the ability of nursery rhymes to stimulate a range of ages, whilst alluding to issues of the competence of the reader to unpick themes which have often been buried by 'clean-up' techniques:

When the disguise is so complete and the stories so fragmentary, much more is left up to the imagination of the listener. Children and parents have available to them ... many rhymes capable of generating a multiplicity of interpretations ... so as to serve all of us in our different moods and different positions in the life cycle. They represent the articulation of raw experience as it is transformed by language and culture with a simplicity which puts them within reach of a shared developmental rendezvous point for both parents and children.

(DeSantis, 2004, pp. 625-6)

Musical analysis of eleven well-known nursery rhymes highlights the musical factors that make them accessible to children as listeners and as vocal participants (Appendix 4). Although many of these tunes have been attached to the words after

the fact, I argue that their musical attributes have allowed the rhymes to transcend their origins as political satire or historical documentary. Whilst five of the rhymes have an overall melodic range of an octave, the average is ten semi-tones (a minor seventh) placing them within the reach of most amateur singers. The average largest consecutive melodic interval is 6.5 semi-tones, just less than a perfect fifth. Manageable intervals such as these are not only typical of children's music overall but aid communal singing (Dockray, 2005). The combination of 'adult' lyrical themes with simple inclusive music recurs in many of the songs of music hall and folk and other genres. Such an arrangement constitutes a paradigm that in this context I call 'the nursery rhyme formula'. Songs that exemplify this formula reject the separateness of the Rousseau-ist childhood and, whilst the music may typify the category of children's music, the words provide common ground for children and adults to explore universal themes. The next three case studies reinforce the idea of music as an age-shared experience, although the variations in the childness of both the musical elements and the lyrical themes of the artists and the texts elicit a variety of 'listening events'.

3.2 Pre-childhood folk music: Pete Seeger, Lead Belly and *Bagpuss*

While it's true that some songs are better for some ages, and others for other ages, folklorists throughout the world have noted that the best songs will reach kids from 8 to 80. A little story turns out to be universal.

(Pete Seeger, 1990)

3.2.1 Pete Seeger sings *For kids and just plain folks*

Seeger dedicated much of his extensive career to recording and performing music for children contributing to at least twenty-seven albums of children's music. In the early 1950s, he claimed to be able to recall around six hundred songs; many of these made it only his albums for children (Dunaway, 1981, p. 8). My analysis focusses on the compilation album *For kids and just plain folks* (1999, Folkways) which spans Seeger's sixty plus years as a children's recording artist. I argue that

many of the songs he recorded pre-date the social and cultural construction of modern western childhood and therefore do not possess many of the tropes of childness commonly found in more contemporary-sounding musical products created for a specific and separate audience of children. In the pre-electrified rural locations from which many of Seeger's songs originate, death was ever present. Access to healthcare (including midwives) was greatly limited, levels of literacy were low and, in the absence of electricity, the manual tasks involved in the sustenance of a family were arduous in the extreme. Bereavement, murder and illness were a very real part of rural American life. The folk ballads on which Seeger draws throughout his career include images of rotting corpses ('John Brown's Body'), the murder of unfaithful lovers ('Frankie and Johnny'), suicide ('Goodnight, Irene') and last dying words ('So long it's been good to know you (Dusty old Dust)') some of which are included on his children's albums. Seeger's wider repertoire includes traditional ballads that, like many of the nursery rhymes above, document specific historical events and characters. Seeger's intergenerational approach to his children's music bears all the hallmarks of the nursery rhyme formula.

For example, 'Little Birdie'³² is a question and answer dialogue ostensibly with a tiny bird.

Little birdie. Little birdie. What makes you fly so high?
It's because I am a true little bird. I do not fear to die.

Little birdie. Little birdie. What makes your wings so blue?
It's because I've been grieving, grieving after you.

Little birdie. Little birdie. What makes your head so red?
After all that I've been through it's a wonder I ain't dead

The song has a high tempo, irregular bar lengths and a soaring melody with the highest notes held across anything up to two bars. Seeger's version alternates exclusively between the tonic and dominant chords throughout. As such it scores a

³² This version of 'Little Birdie' is a live recording originally included as the opening song on his *Children's Concert at Town Hall* album (Columbia, 1963). Seeger had learned the song from one of the Coon Creek Girls in 1940 (Anon, 1962) and it had been recorded by fellow Folkways Records artists Roscoe Holcomb and Wade Ward the year before. This traditional ballad was first collected in 1909 and recorded in 1925 by Land Norris. Patton suggests that the song 'can be heard almost anywhere in the Appalachians' (in Matteson, 2008).

very high 92% for Music on the CMQ. However, the 'little birdie' in this song was originally either a 'pretty woman' or a 'married woman' (Matteson, 2008). The use of allegory creates a multi-layered text; although the 'true' meaning of the lyrics are merely alluded to, the song on one level documents infidelity and physical abuse by an aggrieved lover. As an educated collector of folk songs, Seeger would have been well aware of such a 'top down' interpretation.

Despite the humour in the delivery and the child-friendly nature of both the music (67% on the CMQ) and the lyrics (100%), Seeger's recording of 'Henry My Son' (perhaps better known as 'Green and Yeller') is a dialogue between a dying boy and his mother and documents the boy's requests for his own funeral.³³ The humour in the song stems from the dynamic shifts between the voice of the mother and the son, and the increased tempo of the last line of each verse ('Mother be quick, I'm gonna be sick and lay me down to die'). The a cappella delivery and the decrease in both dynamics and tempo towards the end adds pathos to the tragic narrative.

'Here's to Cheshire, Here's to cheese' is a version of a medieval ballad better known as 'Froggy went a courting', a song closely associated with children's culture.³⁴ The theme of the many extant versions concerns a drunken wedding celebration gone horribly wrong when the bride, groom and various guests are eaten by a cat, a duck, and a big black snake. Seeger's version proceeds with the usual festivities (wedding bells, champagne) when first Uncle Rat ('She wet her whiskers in his blood') and then Miss Mousey ('Puss made a pounce and he broke her back') are killed by the 'good grey cat'. Once again, high CMQ scores of 83% for Music and 73% for Lyrics belie the violence that unfolds in the song. Seeger's version of Guthrie's down-tempo 'Hobo's lullaby' concerns grey-haired migrant workers travelling illegally on trains, who find a momentary respite from the ever-present law enforcers. The narrator of the song attempts to console the hobo by saying 'when you die and go to heaven you'll find no policemen there'. The song scores only a low 45% for Lyrics

³³ In his spoken introduction to 'Henry my Son', Seeger describes how the song is an English adaptation of the ballad 'Lord Randall'. Seeger's version is better known as 'Green and Yeller'. The 'Henry' in this musical hall adaptation refers to King Henry the First and his death from eating too many eels (Gilchrist, 1908, in *As It Was*, 2011).

³⁴ It has been suggested the characters and incidents in the 'Here's to Cheshire' refer to the marriage of Queen Elizabeth I to a French man (Wells, 1977 in Highland, 2007) and to her references to her ministers (Hackett, 1983, in Highland, 2007). There are over 170 documented verses to the song (Highland, 2007). The song was first published in Scotland 1549 and in England in 1611 as 'A Moste Strange Weddinge of the Ffrogge and the Mowse' (Marsh, 2006).

on the CMQ, and a modest 75% for Music. Seeger's inclusion of one of Guthrie's adult songs reveals his willingness to serve up the complexities of 'real life' to children. 'This old car' is a self-penned wafer-thin double entendre ostensibly about a car that keeps breaking down. A fifty-two year old Seeger sings 'the pistons do what they're supposed to do, and Little Molly keeps it lubricated all the time'; the garage mechanic replies 'the parts are just a little worn down there. Reach down and give her a little jiggle'. The song scores a low 55% on the CMQ for Lyrics, evidence that in terms of metre, phrase length, rhyme and other factors concerned with the words, 'This old car' has little childness. Its inclusion on one of Seeger's children's albums seems extraordinary as it perhaps the only highly-sexualised song in his entire seventy-plus year career. *For Kids'* penultimate song 'Be kind to your parents' is a conceptually-complex inversion of a 'typical' children's song in which child-like attributes are projected onto adults. The song originates from the 1954 Broadway musical *Fanny* ('A tale of love, secrets, and passion set in and around the old French port of Marseille'). The use of irony (and perhaps sarcasm) in the lines 'remember that grown-ups is a difficult stage of life. They tend to be nervous and over excited' and 'some day you might wake up and find you're a parent too' are at odds with the song's child-friendly music (75% CMQ) and place the full meaning of the text beyond readers of any age who lack the competence to decode them.

Musically, Seeger makes little if any concession for his young audience. Vocal melodies and harmonies are usually foregrounded in both folk and children's recordings and Seeger generally presented his songs with minimal instrumental backing, usually just his trademark long-necked five-string banjo or a single acoustic guitar. Frequently, he sings a cappella. As mentioned previously, the relative complexity of vocal melodies reveals the relationship between the performer and their intended audience. Large overall melodic ranges and extended consecutive melodic intervals make the vocal delivery more challenging, potentially dissuading novice singers from participating. Non-participants are thus forced to listen to 'expert' onstage rather than coproducing the music through vocal participation. In concert, Seeger is well known for his ability to encourage even the most difficult audiences to song along, often coaching his audience through harmony parts whilst

prompting the words a line at a time. However, my analysis of the melodic ranges (the musical distance between the lowest and the highest notes sung) and largest vocal intervals (the largest distance between adjacent notes) shows that he does not decrease the complexity when singing for children. I compare *For kids and just plain folks* with one of his typical 'adult' albums, the environmental-themed *God Bless the Grass* (Columbia, 1966).

The average of the largest sequential melodic interval in *For kids* is eight semitones. On *God bless the grass*, it is just six. The average melodic range of the songs on *For kids* is an octave and a minor third (fifteen semitones); on *God Bless the Grass* it is a very similar octave and a semi tone (thirteen semitones). Seeger shows little concession for the children in his audience and expects them to engage with material of undifferentiated complexity alongside adults. Like Guthrie, the songs on Seeger's children's albums tend to consist of the I, IV and V chords and strongly favour the relationship between the tonic and the dominant. This is the same for much of his 'adult' material and for most American and European folk music (and pop, rock and other popular forms). All of the songs on *For Kids* are in the major key, a tonality typical of the vast majority of children's records. By comparison, *God Bless the Grass* has four songs in the minor key and one that uses a modal scale (neither major nor minor). As seen in Table 1 (p. 32), major tonality connotes happiness in the context of children's music. Music from the Middle East, the Far East and other non-Western cultures often use modal, or pentatonic scales, which, to western ears, are emotionally more ambiguous. Tempo also plays a part in the emotional reception of songs for very young children. Slower tempos, whether in the major or minor key, indicate sadness. The thirteen songs that have a defined pulse on *For Kids* have an average tempo of 121 bpm, whilst *God Bless the Grass* averages 118 bpm. This is interesting as producer and Folkways label owner Moe Asch encouraged Seeger to perform his songs slower for his young audiences (Place, 2012). On his versions of the songs on *For kids* written by Guthrie ('Put your finger in the air' and 'This and is your land'), Seeger decreases the tempi and makes the pulse regular, 'corrections' which, as discussed in chapter two helped assure the lasting popularity of Guthrie's two most widely-known children's songs.

Unlike Guthrie however, Seeger tends towards education rather than entertainment. Worthy content and diverse musical styles are delivered with a studied authority. Adult subject matter is often backed by uncompromising music. The lack of age-differentiation renders the child invisible in the process and holds the separateness of the Romantic childhood up for question. Whilst recognising that folk as a genre form has many musical and other attributes that potentially appeal to both children and adults imbuing the songs with an innate childness, Seeger's texts for children display neither elevated levels of childness for their implied audience of children (the clue is in the name – *For kids*) nor require them from listeners for a successful and rewarding 'listening event' (see Appendix 14 for a visual representation of this and other anticipated listening events).

3.2.2 Lead Belly sings for children

Despite being an unlikely candidate for a children's entertainer (he was serving prison time for a double murder when his songs were first recorded), Lead Belly released successful albums of songs for children including *Negro songs for young people* (Folkways, 1960) later released as part of *Lead Belly sings for children* (Folkways, 1999). The vast majority of Lead Belly's songs contain music with high levels of childness as indicated by the attributes listed under 'music' in the CMQ (Appendix 2). Tonic, sub-dominant and dominant (I, IV, V) major chord progressions are used almost exclusively. 'We're in the same boat, brother' is the only song that introduced the super-tonic (II) chord. Tempi are high averaging 140 bpm across the 28 songs on *Lead Belly sings ...* In keeping with folk's attractiveness as a vehicle for children's music, vocal melodies are prominent in the recording and uncluttered by either instrumentation or vocal harmonies. Some of the songs such as 'You can't lose me Cholly' and 'Sally Walker' derive from 'play party' songs used to accompany games with actions.³⁵ From a musical perspective, the songs are highly typical of children's music.

³⁵ These originate from Lead Belly's *Play Parties in Song and Dance as sung by Lead Belly* (Folkways, 1941).

However, like many of the case studies in this thesis, many of Lead Belly's songs combine music of high childness with 'adult' lyrical themes of low childness. This 'music hall' formula (discussed in more depth on pages 71 and 95) applies as equally to much children's folk music as does to the significant 'adult' lyrical content of *Children's Choice* (chapter four) and *The Muppet Show* (chapter five). Lead Belly's children's songs 'Old Man' and 'You can't lose me Cholly' feature the courting of widows and daughters. 'They hung him on the cross' involves a graphic description of the crucifixion of Christ:

They hung him on a cross just for me ...
They speared him in the side just for me ...
And the blood came streaming down just for me ...
He hung his head and died just for me.

'Midnight Special' is one of Lead Belly's signature songs, yet its inclusion on a children's album raises questions about categorisation and the differentiation of the age of the intended audience through product labelling (Lead Belly sings *for* children) and marketing (the album cover features audience of children, rainbow-coloured lettering and lower case fonts). The song documents prison routines such as meal times and visiting hours including an incident in which the narrator is informed that his wife is dead. The verses give advice on how to stay out of jail and mention by name the prison in which Lead Belly was an inmate (Sugarland). The chorus offers solace in the form of the 'ever-loving light' of the passing trains. whilst the other lyrics reflect the rustic working lives of families in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Unlike Guthrie's evocations of urban and suburban life, Lead Belly's songs for children highlight the rurality of his Louisiana upbringing where everyday activities such as wood chopping ('Julie Ann Johnson'), ox-driving ('Woa Back Buck') and cotton picking ('Pick a bale of cotton' and 'Cotton fields') were necessities. Animal characters proliferate in 'Blue tailed fly', 'Grey Goose', and 'Red Bird'. Indeed, a good deal of children's culture is animalised. Children are constructed as 'other' to adult's humanity: wild, mysterious, unpredictable and in need of taming.

Like Guthrie's songs for children, there are examples of nursery rhyme-type nonsense in Lead Belly's 'Polly Wee' ('Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Yolla, Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Polly Wee, Polly Wee, Polly Wee') and 'Grey Goose' (a fanciful tale of a goose that can't be killed).

The children's records made by Lead Belly, and indeed Seeger, contrast with much contemporary children's music. Their frequent use of 'grown up' lyrical themes often wrapped in metaphor blurs age-constructed boundaries and allows multiple interpretations of the texts to be accessed with the onset of experiential competence. As suggested throughout, music rather than lyrics becomes the main signifier of children's music. The indistinct age categorisation implied by the lyrics of many of Lead Belly's songs reveals their origins not as songs for children but as songs for all, songs by and for 'the folk'. Much modern children's music tends to foreground children's difference from adults, distinctions made explicit not only in the music, but in the lyrics and sonic qualities of the recordings. Consumerism, targeted marketing and other industrial-social phenomena not only support but rely on obvious age categorisation. The recently-emerged tween market has been criticised for delivering inappropriate sexualised content to pre-teens and blurring age boundaries. Yet Lead Belly, Seeger and others were releasing equivalent records many years before. Indeed, Lead Belly was a father of two whilst still a child himself and was playing music in brothels from the age of fifteen. The low levels of childness and the lack of age-defining signifiers of his own young life have spilled over into the songs he recorded for children.

3.2.3 The songs of *Bagpuss* and the influence of nostalgia

Despite being made in the 1970s, *Bagpuss* was recently voted the most popular British children's TV programme (Worthington, 2006). The show's appeal stems from its use of nostalgic imagery, its depiction of traditional family roles, and its archaic-sounding folk music. The slow-moving stories, often based on folk tales, and stop-motion animation seem incongruous with more recent computer generated animated shows, yet sit comfortably within ahistorical notions of vintage, upcycling and shabby chic and a post-digital aesthetic of tangible sensory 'authenticity'. As

such *Bagpuss* was typical of the other Small Films programme's created by Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin (Ivor the Engine, Noggin the Nog, Pogles' Wood, Pingwings, The Clangers, Tottie). More recent BBC productions such as *Teletubbies* and *In the Night Garden* employ a similarly 'slow' approach along with high levels of repetition, and music that is highly typical of children's music (high 'twinkling' bells, glockenspiels, soft strings, major key melodies).

In each of the thirteen episodes of *Bagpuss*, Emily (a child) brings a lost and broken object (a link to the past) into the shop (Victorian exterior, floral 1970s interior). The various inhabitants offer their interpretations as to the object's identity. *Bagpuss* ('an old, saggy cloth cat'; the 'family's' id) proffers an intuitive account formed from his life experience of travelling and adventure. The knowing and learned old woodpecker Professor Yaffle (the super-ego) attempts a logical scientific explanation, whilst the musical duo of Madeleine the Rag Doll and Gabriel the Toad (the pair of them being the ego) sing folk songs and recite ancient folk tales inspired by the object. The mice represent children: they are small in stature, naïve, always questioning, playful and mischievous, and are frequently reprimanded by Madeleine and Yaffle for their 'silly' behaviour.

The songs were arranged and performed by folk musicians Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner who voice Madeleine and Gabrielle respectively. Some of the songs of *Bagpuss* feature extensive use of nonsense rhymes and imagery, placing them into an established lineage of children's culture that includes texts by Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, Dr. Seuss, Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Woody Guthrie (see previous chapter, pp. 50-54). In *Bagpuss*' 'Row, row, row your boat' the mice sail a ballet shoe down the hall in search of cheese:

Row, row, row the boat. Softly on the floor.
Flippety, floppety, slippily, sloppily. Who could ask for more?

Bing, bang, bong and bump. Heavily down the stairs.
Bingeldy, bangeldy, bongaldy, bumpety. Down the apples and pairs.

Row, row, home the goat. Sticky with orange squash.
Lickily, stickily, gluely, gummily. What a lot of bosh!

Nonsense rhymes have positive benefits for children; they help them test the rules of speech and literacy (Hopkin, 1984, p. 11) and assist them in making sense of the world around them (Children's author Korney Chukovsky 'the Russian Dr. Seuss' in Lesnik-Oberstein, 1994, p. 2).

Like the other folk songs in this chapter, many of the songs of *Bagpuss* originate from an age-undifferentiated folk culture that pre-dates modern childhood. 'Haste to the wedding' is of Gaelic origin and has been traced back to at least 1767 where it was commonly played on church bells before the ceremony (Haste to the wedding jig, 2007). 'I saw a ship a-sailing' is an ancient English folk tune containing archaic language ('comfits in the cabin') and themes of slavery ('chains around their necks'). 'Old woman tossed up in a basket' is at least 250 years old and is commonly known as a nonsense song for Morris dancing (*ibid.*). *Bagpuss* features a number of work songs ('The Weaving Song', 'The Miller's Song', 'Agricultural Jigs') and Celtic dance tunes (reels and jigs such as 'The Laird of Drumblair', 'Brian O'Lynn' and 'The Oak Tree Reel'). Their inclusion on a children's TV show highlights adults' intentions for a child viewer-listener to mediate the songs to the best of their ability at that stage in their childhood.

These uncompromising 'adult' texts form the bulk of *Bagpuss*' songs, yet it is important to highlight exceptions ('differences of genre cannot be properly described in a haphazard way'; Hollindale, 1997, p. 37). 'Song of the flea' is a good example of how children can be focalised by a text. The differences in physical size between the child protagonist and the (metaphorical) world of younger, smaller children and bigger adults are constituted musically; lyrics, melody and tempo all contribute to the overall message. The first half of this song describes tiny animals in awe at the size differentials between each other. Each four-bar melodic phrase rises through a minor pentatonic scale from a tonic 'D' note up to the dominant on the 'A', finally reaching a full octave as the smaller characters lift their heads to gaze at the larger ones. In the second half of the song, the boy ('Little Billy') describes a visit to the zoo where all the animals were 'many, many times as big as me'. The song changes melody and meter, initially modulating down a fifth as if Billy is now looking up from a lower vantage point. Madeleine the rag doll replaces the

masculine Gabriel the toad as the singer, contributing to Billy's smallness when compared to the rhinos, hippos and elephants he encounters in the zoo. The song rises and falls dramatically in tempo through the final two verses corresponding to the points where Billy, at first, becomes excited by the prospect of seeing giant animals (tempo rises to approximately 125 bpm) before being overawed by a realisation of his place in the big wide world where the tempo slows to a halt. Most interestingly, this song is predominantly in the minor key. This is unusual for children's music as a whole, giving the song a high degree of memorability through its exceptionality. Young children, unlike adults, use tempo rather than key as a signifier of emotion (Mote, 2011). To young children, high tempo songs are happy, independent of tonality. Older children and adults in the West equate the minor key with sadness. The combination of the minor key and the lyrics of 'Song of the flea' evoke the vulnerability of being small, the anxieties of growing up, and the nostalgic sadness of a childhood rapidly passing, all important emotions that the creators of 'Song for the flea' do well to provide for the empowerment of their young (and not so young) listeners.

An analysis of the twenty-two songs from the thirteen episodes of *Bagpuss* (see Appendix 5) reveals that their average overall melodic range is an octave and a major third. This is large compared with the sixth to seventh of most chart pop songs or with the minor sixth of well-known nursery rhymes (see Appendix 4). Traditional children's songs and modern children's pop use short scale-wise melodies and short melodic ranges (Hopkin, 1984; Kenney, 2005; Osborn-Seyffert, 1988; Shehan, 1987) whilst the songs of *Bagpuss* feature complex melodies with wide intervals. As such, Kerr and Faulkner's work is musically more challenging than most other 'popular' genres and shows little compromise for the child listener. Their average largest consecutive musical interval is 7.7 semi-tones compared with 6.5 for nursery rhymes. An abundance of six eight and three four time signatures sets their work apart from modern chart pop and much contemporary children's music.³⁶ The origins of the songs, and much of the lyrical content reflect the

³⁶ The Tweenies' four albums only use four four rhythms whilst 'Lazy Town' exclusively use a 'four on the floor' European dance music beat.

musician's geographic backgrounds (Worthington, 2006). Only 'Turtle Calypso' features folk music from outside the British Isles (Jamaica). The nationalistic and regional nature of Boym's restorative nostalgia (2002, pp. 41-49) is writ large over the 'Weaving Song' (Northumbria), 'The Laird of Drumblair', 'Hamish McTavish' (both Scottish), 'Old Woman Tossed up in a Basket' (Dorset, England), and 'The Oak Tree Reel' (Donegal, Ireland) (Kuntz, 2007).

Kerr and Faulkner's 'The miller's song' uses a modal scale which would have been familiar to Medieval English church goers. Modal music is only occasionally present in Western pop and rock but remains integral to folk music. Despite being a recent construction, 'The miller's song' provides an authentic evocation of rural life before the onset of industrialisation, describing the contributions of the ploughman, the farmer, the miller and the baker to the creation of a loaf of bread. The down tempo modal music, broken guitar chords and the use of archaic language ('harrow the ground', 'drill in the seed', 'roll it down', 'open the rill') combine to create a melancholic and highly nostalgic musical evocation of the seasons changing and the years passing.

The provision of realistic portrayals of children's lives, embedded in the world of adults helps children in their quest towards adulthood. The music of *Bagpuß* plays a large part in this supportive construction. Songs that appeal to the adults in family groups will survive the incalculable repetitions of children's music listening patterns.

Hollindale notes how in order for a reading 'event' to be actualised as 'children's literature' it requires the reader to be 'a child who is still in the business of constructing his or her own childhood, and aware of its presentness – aware that it is not yet over' (1997, p. 29). However, adults who engage with the same text must reconstruct their childness through personal memory and the distorting lens of the ever-changing childness of the society in which they live. They must negotiate between 'broader cultural meanings and half-remembered individual experience' (Steadman in Moran, 2002, p. 161). Both of these strands of childness affect how adult producers perceive childhood and thus how they communicate those views to the children in the process (1997, p. 48).

This distorting lens is better known as nostalgia, the ‘mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values (Boym, 2002, p. 8). Originally defined as a type of homesickness (Davis, 1977, p. 415), nostalgia is a painful yearning for ‘the familiar rather than the novel, for certainty rather than discovery’ (*ibid.*, p. 422). It is associated with a sense of loss and of the restoration of innocence, certainty, simplicity, and freedom (Turner, 1987, p. 150). Those in thrall to nostalgia believe that ‘life in the past was “happier” – that families were closer, that pollution was absent [and] that peace and order prevailed’ (Lowenthal, 1989, p. 28). Through nostalgia, the perceived simplicity of folk music idealises pastoral themes and a leisurely tranquillity (Turner, 1987, p. 147) whilst fostering a desire for community values and anti-modernism (Stauth and Turner, 1988, pp. 510-511). Such wistful longing fuelled the Romantic’s view of idealised lost worlds, the Victorian’s resurrection of Medievalism (Lowenthal, 1989, pp. 20-21) and I argue is central to the discourses of childhood promoted by the work of John Reith and Derek McCulloch on the BBC’s *Children’s Choice* (chapter four), and Jim Henson on *The Muppet Show* (chapter five) and in the consumer identities, such as ‘cute’ kawaii, detailed in chapters seven and eight. Homesickness is a useful metaphor although the home in question is impossible to locate, situated just beyond the reaches of individual and collective adult memory. The nostalgic individual yearns for elusive stability in a chaotic world, fantasising their childhood as ‘a time of supposed tranquillity and assurance’ (Jing, 2006, p. 360). The faster the pace of change, the greater the longing for stability. Any sense of progress or social gain is tempered by feelings of loss and mourning for what has been replaced (Pickering and Keightley, 2006, p. 921).

Authors have described a number of ‘modalities’ of nostalgia; Boym’s *restorative* (2002, p. 41) and *reflective* (*ibid.*, p. 49) modes are echoed by Pickering and Keightley’s nostalgic *mood* and nostalgic *mode* (2006, p. 932). The restorative impulse (nostalgic mood) involves the ‘creation of a delusionary homeland’ (Boym, 2002, p. 43) through the restoration of invented traditions. It is this mode of nostalgia that informs the folk and music hall of this chapter. Events and symbols from the past are resurrected, rebuilt and restored in an attempt to forge a new

collective memory. Ideas of tradition, heritage and the linking of the present with the values of the past are strong in restorative nostalgia which promotes patriotic feeling, a sense of belonging ultimately national identity (Moran, 2002, p. 160). The resulting reconstruction of the past may have little to do with actual historical events (Pickering and Keightley, 2006, p. 923). Individuals are more likely to remember the mediated version of events than the actual experience (Davis, in *ibid.*, 2006, p. 929) whilst recollections of the past may be considered as a continuum with 'history at one end, nostalgia at the other and memory as a bridge or transition between them' (Cook in *ibid.*, p. 927).

Boym's other mode is *reflective* in which the past is open to multiple interpretations rather than the one overriding meta-narrative of restorative nostalgia (2002, p. 49). Reflective nostalgia combines signs and signifiers from the past in ironic and playful ways to create a post-modern, self-reflective, ever-changing present. The globalised, commercialised children's culture of chapters seven and eight is sustained on such reflective tendencies. As highlighted in the discussions of kawaii and the Japanification of global culture in chapter eight, nostalgia may be the twenty-first century's dominant aesthetic (Turner, 1987, p. 152). Perhaps most useful for a study of children's music is the idea that reflective nostalgia can rebuild visions of the past in playful and parodic ways subverting authoritative meta-narratives and eroding the fixity and ubiquity of a past mediated by issues of class, gender, race and age (Staught and Turner, 1988, p. 519).

Overall, the folk songs of Seeger, Lead Belly, Kerr and Faulkner represent a body of work where, with obvious variations in specific texts, the childness, especially in the lyrics, is low. The success of the 'listening event' and hence the extent to which a child listener engages with the text depends on their level of childness at that socially-prescribed moment. As represented in the diagram in Appendix 14, children with high levels of childness may fail to recognise such a text as being 'for children' and will disconnect with the listening event. The text is too 'adult' for them at that stage of their journey. Conversely, a child listener with low levels of childness or even an adult reader with their own varying amounts of childness would actualise the song as 'music' rather than 'children's music' (Hollindale, 1997,

p. 28). *Bagpuss*' animated toys, story telling mode, and use of child characters (Emily and the mice) provide hooks of high childness to counter the low levels in the music.

The next section deals with issues of censorship driven by commercial intent and the degree to which children are excluded from adult society through the cultural construction of childhood, concepts that inform all of the subsequent case studies.

3.3 Music Hall's enduring influence on children's music

There is an enemy at the door of folk music which is driving it out, namely the common popular [music hall] songs of the day; and this enemy is one of the most repulsive and insidious.

(Sir Hubert Parry's *Inaugural address to the Folk Song Society*, 1899, in Storey, 2003, p. 11)

Despite emerging in the mid-nineteenth century, music hall was one of the two dominant musical styles for children's music in the twentieth century (folk being the other; Bickford, 2012). Music hall songs as original compositions and pastiche recreations have continued to be popular with children's music singers and songwriters such as Julia Donaldson, Raffi and Paul Joyce. Producer George Martin's music hall-style songs formed a sizable portion of the playlists of the BBC's *Children's Choice* in the 1950s and 1960s (see chapter four). Family films such as *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Hughes, 1968), *Half a Sixpence* (Sidney, 1967), *Doctor Doolittle* (Fleischer, 1967), *Oliver* (Reed, 1968), *Bugsy Malone* (Parker, 1976) and *Mary Poppins* (Stevenson, 1964) feature music hall songs and soundtracks. Like *The Muppet Show* many British TV shows of the mid to late 1970s³⁷ employed the variety show format and intergenerational impulse of music hall. I argue that the contradictory ideological of combining child-friendly music with 'adult' lyrical themes contributes to both music hall's popularity as a genre for children by

³⁷ *Seaside Special*, *Crackerjack*, *The Wheelers and Shunters Social Club*, *The Little and Large Show*, and *Cannon and Ball* are a selection.

providing 'open' texts with layers of meaning that may be actualised by children as they grow.

Music hall developed as an inherently intergenerational art form. Profound social changes in the mid to late 1800s forged a bond between children, entertainment and commerce that is yet to be broken. The songs they popularised and the variety show format have continued to inform children's culture into the twenty-first century. I argue that this link is due in large part to the musicological aspects of the songs. The conflicting discourses of childhood (Romantic and Puritan/Evangelical) that flourished in the Victorian era are still identifiable in recent children's culture.

The rise in popularity of music hall, the development of modern childhood and the commercialisation of popular culture as youth culture emerged symbiotically in the new cities of the industrial revolution (Denisoff, in Langbauer, 2009, p. 538). Rapid developments in society, economics, technology, health, science, philosophy and the law coincided with changes in the religiosity of the urban populations.

Industrialists, educators and entrepreneurs fought for children's bodies, minds and money. Liberal philosophers and concerned individuals clashed with religious leaders over the place and purpose of children in society. The flowering of liberalism inspired by Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke (who popularised the tabula rasa/blank slate model of childhood in the 1600s) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'walled garden' approach to the separation of childhood found an enemy in the Protestant moral majority of the 1800s. In the new cities, children become a social issue. As previously discussed, children in pre-industrialised rural communities shared work and entertainment with adults. In the rapidly expanding urban centres, children simultaneously become a threat to society and a distinct social body worthy of concern, special treatment and severance from the world of adults. Victorian children had disposable income from working in the new factories and mills or as sweeps, street sellers and prostitutes; they were often the main breadwinners. A series of laws in the early 1800s began to define childhood as a separate state on both sides of the Atlantic. The term 'juvenile delinquent' became a legal definition for New York's young criminals under the age of twenty-one (Savage, 2007, p. 9). Mary Carpenter's book of 1853 *Juvenile Delinquents: Their*

condition and treatment did much to bring the age, at least in New York, up to sixteen. In the UK, a series of Factory Acts from 1802 to 1878 began to regulate children's working hours and conditions.³⁸

By 1851, more people were living in towns than in the countryside in the U.K. (Cheshire, 1974, p. 24; Russell, 1997, p. 12) whilst mortality rates doubled between 1840 and 1870. Overcrowding and the abundance of open sewers helped spread diseases such as cholera, smallpox, typhus, scarlet fever and diarrhoea. Children were especially vulnerable. A series of acts regulated burials (1852-3), promoted vaccination and improved public health (1870s) yet infant mortality in England, and Wales continued to rise to a peak in the 1890s (Culshaw, 2013) becoming a common feature of nineteenth-century literature in the process (Lerner in Vallone, 2000, p. 224). Whilst Puritan discourses of the Evangelical child full of 'original sin' continued to flourish more liberal religious views based on the New Testament and the goodness of infants, such as the baby Jesus, resulted in the provision of orphanages, schools and the *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children* (1884). Social divisions persisted yet increasingly members of the middle class became concerned for the plight of those living in poverty, perceived degradation and cultural ignorance, setting up 'music for the people' events which directly influenced the birth of music hall. Affordable concerts consisting of 'opera ... glees, ballads, and respectable comic song' were performed in industrial centres such as Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester reaching a peak of popularity in the mid-1800s (Russell, 1997, p. 33). Yet, from their earliest conception in the 1830s, in the function rooms of public houses, music halls faced complaints and protests from both the middle classes and industrialists about working class habits such as excessive drinking (bosses noted reduced productivity) and general un-Godliness. Prostitution in the Halls was apparently rife and the consumption of alcohol was unregulated by age until 1886. In fact, drinking seems to have been the main focus of the Halls with entertainment included merely to encourage greater consumption

³⁸ By 1802, children under nine could no longer be employed in mills and factories. Those aged between nine and thirteen were limited to eight hours daily work, whilst fourteen to eighteen year olds could only work for twelve hours a day. By 1878, factory work for children between ten and eighteen could not exceed a ten-and-a-half hour day, and a working week of no more than sixty hours.

(Cheshire, 1974, pp. 82-83). By the mid 1800s, temperance organisations such as Leeds' *Band of Hope* were teaching working-class children the 'evils of drink'. Children from the age of six met once a week to enjoy lectures, mass singing and alcohol-free drinks. Concerns about music halls as 'dens of iniquity' and their corrupting influence over working-class youngsters flourished. Music hall audiences were predominantly under twenty-five years old (Faulk, 2004, p. 10); up to half of some audiences were aged between ten and fourteen (Russell, 1997, p. 91). Many of the Halls had no admission charge and there was seemingly little concern at the time for the attendance of children. Parliament suggested that as children had been working in mills and factories alongside adults all day, they should be allowed to participate in the same entertainment (*ibid.*).

Fuelled by an entrepreneurial zeal, youth culture began to emerge on both sides of the Atlantic. Savage describes the emergence of a 'new vitalism' in which youth, health and fitness are prized (2007, p. 69). The short life expectancy of city dwellers led to 'an infinite prolongable now!' and a 'seize the moment' attitude that ran counter to the Protestant ethic of 'hard work, selfless investment, and common bounty' (Barber, 2007, p. 39). Advances in mass media technology and commercial practices convolved to produce a slew of new products for the young of which music hall was symptomatic. The proliferation of these products validated the concept of 'youth' as both economically important and highly desirable. Young people with their own money revelled in an abundance of entertainment, drink, and drugs. Cocaine, morphine and opium were freely available from druggists and pharmacies whilst new products such as *Coca-Cola*³⁹ led children to bohemian lifestyles (Savage, 2007, pp. 58-60). The music publishing centre of New York (Tin Pan Alley) expanded rapidly with sheet music revenues trebling through the 1890s (*ibid.*, p. 124). In 1889, youngsters of all classes helped popularise the syncopated and highly-danceable piano-led ragtime music, characterised by Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* (published by John Stark and Son in 1899). Elders detected 'a virulent poison' and suspected that children were 'falling prey to the collective soul of the

³⁹ In the late 1800s, Coca-Cola contained an estimated nine milligrams of cocaine and significant amounts of caffeine per glass (Liebowitz, 1983).

Negro' (*ibid.*, p. 124). Music hall reflected the vivacity of this new youth culture. As centres of liberal hedonism in which both children and women could participate, the Halls ran counter to many middle-class values. Early attempts to reform or close the Halls centred on alcohol (Kift, 1995, p. 225), but by the 1870s, the focus shifted to the culture of music hall itself. Middle class observers of 1875 were appalled by the 'thoroughly objectionable and immoral tendency of the entertainment' and the 'boisterous vulgarity and outstanding absurdity, unrelieved by humour, and often flavoured with indecency' (Kift, 1995, pp. 226-228). Anti-liberal 'purity' campaigners stoked by Puritanism raised concerns about the licentiousness of the Halls and the activities that took place both on and off stage. One visitor to a music hall described what he saw:

All chivalry, all honour, the purity of women, the sacredness of marriage, and every private virtue have been defiled ... whilst vice and profligacy have been wantonly displayed, and made themes for familiarity and mirth.

(in Kift, 1995, p. 229)

Social commentator Henry Mayhew highlighted the protectionist tendencies of many concerned Victorians:

Here the stage ... is turned into a platform to teach debauchery. The audience is usually composed of children so young, that these dens become the school-rooms where the guiding morals of a life are picked up, and so precocious are the little things, that the girl of nine will, from contact attendance at such places, have learnt to understand the filthiest sayings, and laugh at them as loudly as the grown-up lads around her.

(1852, in Faulk, 2004, pp. 9-10).

The indecent exposure of women's (and sometimes men's) bodies was the subject of much debate. The long and detailed accounts of the various gymnasts, contortionists, acrobats, strongmen and 'tableaux vivant' (living statues that recreated works of art) recited in obscenity trials reveal the fetishising hypocrisy of many Victorian males (Kift, 1995, p. 226). Such obscenity was not only seen as an

extension of the prostitution that was rife in the Halls but a direct tactic to elicit more trade (Davis, 1991, p. 42).⁴⁰ Largely designed to reduce child prostitution, the age of consent in the U.K. was raised to thirteen in 1875 and then to the current age of sixteen in 1885. In 1889, the licensing of the London Halls was centralised⁴¹ and the authorities moved quickly to restrict children's access. Clean up campaigns designed to ensure a more mainstream acceptance of the Halls led writers and performers to place inappropriate lyrical themes out of the reach of innocent ears through the use of double entendre, satire and parody. To knowing and competent audience members, nods and winks communicated much more than the lyrics alone. For example, Leeds-born Vesta Victoria (famous for 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow' and 'Waiting at the church', both included on *The Muppet Show*) sang a disparaging song about her man's virility using a thinly-veiled allegory of a kettle:

All he's left is this kettle and it's all worn out
Now what's the use of an old tin kettle if it hasn't got a spout

Music hall superstar Harry Champion liked to 'tickle the ladies' fancy with the end of [his] old cigar' whilst Nellie Wallace sang about going for her honeymoon '*three times a day*' (*ibid.*, p. 49). The Lord Chamberlain at the time (1910) noted 'the legendary cleverness of the vulgarity of Marie Lloyd', achieved through winks and pauses, whilst George Bernard Shaw appreciated that 'the indecency in the sketches and songs lay between the lines' (Cheshire, 1974, p. 94).

Despite the efforts of entrepreneurs to 'devulgarise' the Halls and attract middle class audiences⁴² they remained associated with the urban working classes and the morally-dubious ways in which they chose to entertain themselves. Middle-class writers dismissed working-class musical taste as 'moronic' and 'a noisy appendage to low pastimes' (Russell, 1997, p. 8). To one commentator, the Halls featured 'vile songs and dialogues, vomited by the lowest grade of public singers' (Davis, 1991, p.

⁴⁰ One LCC Inspector remarked 'I am of the opinion that not only is prostitution tolerated, but that it is even fostered by the management, at all events in the person of the elderly woman behind the bar [the wife of the proprietor] . . . I can find no other name for such a place than a hell' (Davis, 1991, p. 42).

⁴¹ Licensing of the Halls became centralised in 1889 by the London County Council's (LCC) subcommittee on Theatres and Music halls, (*ibid.*, pp. 40-41).

⁴² 'Nothing will be seen or heard here that will raise a blush or put modesty to shame. Bring your wives and daughters'; in Russell, 1997, p. 97. There was a 'fun without filth' campaign in 1879; Bailey, 1986, p. x).

39). William Morris opined that 'the common people have forgotten what a field or a flower is like, and their idea of beauty is a gas-poisoned gin palace or a tawdry theatre' (Russell, 1997, p. 10). In the 1890s ('The Naughty Nineties'), paradoxical discourses of childhood reached their apotheosis. Respectable Victorians expressed both attraction and repulsion, adoration and fear, pity and disdain for working-class children. These contradictory impulses are evident in twenty-first century childhood, and I argue, in the songs of music hall. The Victorian 'cult of the child' is often seen as a dawning of a new Romanticism (Demers, in Clapp-Itnyre, 2010, p. 145). Yet 'Golden Age' stories such as *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland* feature proactive children who survive and thrive through their own creativity, empowered by their dealings with and manipulations of adults. The perceived transition from the Puritanical child of the early 1800s to the Romantic 'child of nature' is less than clear (Clapp-Itnyre, 2010, p. 160).

Early twentieth century commentators perceived a strong link between the working classes and music hall culture (Bailey, 1986, p. xiv). By 1912, American 'Tin-Pan Alley' and ragtime songs and 'social' dances such as the Charleston had all but eclipsed the older, more 'traditional' music hall styles (Russell, 1997, p. 108). The 'imported heathendom' of American music and the rapid rise in popularity of cinema (Bailey, 1986, p. xiv; Cheshire, 1974, p. 42) prompted concerned and nostalgic archivists to document, categorise and formalise the culture of the Halls lending them an air of respectability. George Orwell saw music hall as 'a national treasure' (Faulk, 2004, p. 10) whilst John Osbourne described it as 'something that once belonged to everyone ... truly a Folk art' (Cheshire, 1974, p. 91). T.S. Eliot suggested that music hall had 'a capacity for expressing the soul of the people' whilst Rudyard Kipling commented that 'old music-hall ditties ... supply a gap in the national history; and people haven't yet realized how much they had to do with the national life' (*ibid.*, p. 89). The subsequent lament over the demise of music hall by middle class observers from the mid 1910s onwards mirrors the outpourings for the disappearance of folk by scholars around the same time. By fetishising a supposedly-vulgar subculture and engaging in fantasies of a materially and culturally-impooverished community united in a drunken knees-up, the educated

classes legitimised their own status as bastions of good taste and curators of high culture.

As revealed by combining the analyses of a wide range of children's music (Appendix 14) music, rather than lyrics or sonic/production aspects is the dominant signifier. The songs of music hall are no exception.

Joseph Tabrar, author of 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow'⁴³ suggested that music rather than lyrics drove his 17,000 or so compositions ('Think of a catchy refrain. Think of the damned silliest words that will rhyme anyhow'; in Bennett, 1986, p. 9). Felix McGlennon, writer of thousands of music hall songs, suggested that:

The main thing is catchiness. I would sacrifice everything – rhyme, reason, sense and sentiment, to catchiness. There is ... a very great art in making rubbish acceptable ... If a rowdy song takes the ear of the public ... I must needs write them

(in Bennett, 1986, p. 10)

The generic features of the music of music hall that have been retained in later children's culture (are based on the most popular and typical exemplars performed by the genre's biggest stars (Harry Champion, Lily Langtree, Vesta Tilly, Marie Lloyd). Similar to the 'nurse rhyme' format above, I define the combination of lyrical signifiers of adulthood with musical signifiers of childhood as 'the music hall formula'. In most cases, such songs combine anthemic, sing-along choruses with a range of adult themes such as death, murder, courtship, and sexuality, using lyrical devices such as satire, irony and double entendre to seemingly placing the full meaning of the songs beyond young listeners. This formula is equally applicable to discussions of tween, Indie Rock and other sub-genres of children's music. However, it is particularly relevant to the next two chapters. The BBC's radio show *Children's Choice* and *The Muppet Show* both had similarly intergenerational remits as the original music halls. Mirroring the initial conception of music halls as educational 'music for the people' events both *Children's Choice* and *The Muppet Show* featured an eclectic range of music and singers performing folk songs, brass

⁴³ Thematic analysis of this song is included in the next chapter due to its inclusion on *The Muppet Show*.

band recitals, classical music, operetta and popular styles. On a music hall play bill, all of these styles had the purpose of engaging a range of generations. The framing of such intergenerationality within different contexts of morality and educationalism (*Children's Choice*) and commercialism and entertainment (*The Muppet Show*) affects the resulting levels of childness, especially when the different media and historical contexts (publically-funded radio show in the 1950s and 1960s, and a highly-intertextual puppet show on TV in the 1970s) are considered.

Chapter Four

'Don't jump off the roof, Dad': The changing family values of the BBC's *Children's Choice*

In March 2009, the BBC stopped broadcasting the Sunday evening literature and poetry programme *Go4it*. At the time, the show was the last children's show on mainstream BBC radio. Appearing just before long-running soap opera *The Archers* in the schedule, *Go4it*'s 450,000-strong listenership often included no children in the show's stated target audience age range of four to fourteen years old. In fact, the average *Go4it* listener was over fifty years of age (Thomas, 2009). Similarly, at the end of 2012, the BBC moved the long-running magazine show *Blue Peter* and all of its children's television programming from its mainstream channels to specialist children's channels CBBC and CBeebies⁴⁴ (Mzimba, 2012). Since 1958, *Blue Peter* had appeared often thrice weekly in the hour before the *Six O'Clock News*.

However, reductions in funding and decreasing audience figures were cited in the decision (Robb, 2012). Furthermore, the BBC claimed that children's viewing habits had changed in part due to their preference for online interactivity.

These moves are indicative of the recent trends in children's media consumption discussed in chapter six. The growth of specialist TV channels for children and the rise in children's use of the internet via mobile electronic devices has, in many ways, separated their media consumption from that of their elders. For a BBC based on 'family values', such 'ghettoisation' reveals just how far the corporation's ideals have changed since its inception. The demographic anomalies that contributed to *Go4it*'s demise also highlight some of the problems of creating and labelling cultural products for specific age groups, especially when an ethos of inclusivity has previously pervaded.

This chapter explores how the BBC dealt with issues of age-categorisation on the Saturday morning radio show *Children's Choice* through the 1950s and 1960s. I discuss how the Director General John Reith's mission for the BBC to 'entertain,

⁴⁴ More recently, some of CBBC's programming has returned to BBC2 (*UK TV Ratings*, 2014).

inform and educate' impacted on children's programming and how philosophies of childhood were communicated through the selection and broadcast of specific recordings. Specifically, the BBC actively promoted the cohesion of the family unit as part of a wider social agenda in order to foster community values. The name of the show is a misnomer; to a large extent, the songs of *Children's Choice* in the 1950s and early 1960s were designed to appeal to all ages, especially mothers. Consequently, many of the show's most requested songs contained a range of 'adult' themes; lyrics about murder, suicide, sex and death are often accompanied by musical (composition) and sonic (production) signifiers of childhood. Analysis of internal communications (memos, letters, meeting minutes, audience research findings and policy documents) and analysis of the songs canonised by the show over its three decade run reveals opposing discourses of childhood. I discuss how children's status as listeners fundamentally changed over the show's lifetime, from part of an intergenerational group enjoying 'family' music, to individuated, atomised consumers, indicative of wider changes in technology, society, and the media-scape. Many of the songs from the show's 'golden years' have remained attractive to adults. I examine the role of adult nostalgia in the commercialisation of children's culture. Analysis indicates that the songs on the slew of recently-released *Children's Choice*-themed CD compilations and the playlists of subsequent annual versions of the *Children's Choice* contain many more tropes of childhood than the original broadcasts. These nostalgic recreations reveal the continuing influence of notions of innocence, separateness and the Romantic discourse on children's culture.

The CMQ offers some rationale as to the contingent and residual popularity of seemingly-inappropriate songs on *Children's Choice*. More widely, I am interested in why *any* of the songs on the show were included. There is a binary opposition at the heart of children's culture. Products are created (written, edited, selected, purchased, broadcast, archived) by a separate and distinct group (adults) from the intended audience (children) (Nodelman in Clapp-Itnyre, 2010, p. 147). Adults create what they hope children will enjoy and consume, yet always leave a trace of their 'adulthood' in the text (Nodelman, 2008, p. 3). As such, the ideologies of the

BBC's writers, producers, and Heads of Department are detectable in the music, lyrics and sonic factors of *Children's Choice's* songs. *Children's Choice* was informed by a number of influential white, educated, middle-class males. I discuss the role of these individuals in perpetuating a particular ideology of childhood, and highlight how this was communicated through the broadcast of family-friendly songs.

4.1 *Children's Hour*: Delight for attentive, serious-minded children

The BBC began broadcasting to children with *Children's Hour* in 1922, its first year as a publicly-funded corporation. Debuting the same week as *Women's Hour*, *Children's Hour* featured stories, plays, poetry and improvised content from the 'Aunties and Uncles' who presented the show. Music comprised only around a quarter of each hour; it came in the form of nursery rhymes, 'pianoforte interludes' and the occasional 'serious' gramophone record. The show's format, content and ethos greatly influenced other BBC children's programmes such as *For the children* (a religious show which began in 1929), *Listen with mother* (from 1950) and *Children's Choice* (from 1953).

Derek McCulloch (Uncle Mac; 'the nation's honorary uncle'; Aitken, 2013, p. 40) presented *Children's Hour* from 1930 and was later appointed Head of Children's Broadcasting in 1933. He was integral to the formulation, communication and execution of the BBC's values on children. McCulloch went on to produce and present *Children's Choice* through much of the 1950s (Hartley, 1983, p. 30) and did much to perpetuate the views of the BBC's first Director General John Reith whose tenure ended in 1939. Commentators note Reith's paternalistic view of audiences and his intentions to form character through the provision of high quality (and frequently 'high-brow') content (Barnard, 1989, p. 26) (R11/27/2).⁴⁵ Under Reith's instruction, the BBC's young listeners were framed within wider family units. Children were but one of a number of generations at which *Children's Choice* and other children's shows were aimed. Reith's ideal child was an attentive and selective listener, which made them not only an excellent family member

⁴⁵ I have used the referencing format used by the BBC Written Archives Centre from where the playlists for *Children's Choice* and most of the company's internal communications have been sourced.

neighbour and good citizen, but a more enlightened person all round (McCulloch 1945 in Oswell, 2002, p. 25). To Reith, the BBC was obliged to enthuse listeners with 'a sense of beauty and joy in all things, and in the experience of participating in life as a whole' and to 'to make people active, not passive' (Tracey, 1998 pp. 67-8). *Children's Hour* was designed to be 'the most strenuous mental and physical work' (Corbett-Smith in Oswell, 2002, p. 29) in order to challenge and inspire even its youngest listeners (Williams, 1998, p. 102). Any element of entertainment had to be 'educative in the best sense' (*ibid.*) lest 'dissatisfaction and boredom result' (Reith 1924 in *ibid.*). The stated aims of *Children's Hour* were ambitious and wide reaching. Despite references to inclusivity, (to broadcast to children of 'every age, shape and sex'; Hartley, 1983, p. 24) the programme's target audience was clearly defined. Communications from 1927 define 'a child' as 'the ordinary boy or girl of 10 to 12, living in a good middle-class home and attending a good school' (R11/27/2). Indeed, such class-based distinctions were made between more serious 'Home Service' children (the station on which *Children's Hour* was broadcast) and 'Light Programme' children. Critics note that *Children's Hour* was London-centric and catered for well-educated middle class 'middlebrow' English children (Williams, 1998, p. 107). The broadcast of at least one piece of classical music in each request show was compulsory, but always at the end so as not to be 'demeaned' by popular music (Barnard, 1989, p. 26), a requirement continued by *Children's Choice*. From 1935, the BBC monitored the vulgarity of musical content, although the nature of any undesirable inclusions is not explicitly stated (Williams, 1998, p. 104). Directives suggest that the content should be differentiated between younger children (between six and ten year olds) and those aged ten to twelve. These age categories were later developed into 'Tinies' (under sevens), 'Middies' (seven to tens) and 'Teens' (tens to fouteens) (R11/27/2). In the mid 1920s, it was suggested that no attempt should be made to create content for children under eight as they are inattentive (central organiser, C.E. Hodges R11/58). Interestingly, half of *Children's Hour's* items are described as being suitable for 'people of any age' over ten (R11/27/2).

Children's Hour's idealised audience of domestic families was promoted through its scheduling. The show was broadcast between five and six o'clock every evening ('a pause in the day's occupations'; McCulloch 1945 in Oswell, 2002, p. 25), the traditional 'tea time' for English families when the children were home from school and the adults back from work (Grevatt, 1988, p. 13). McCulloch suggests that radio provided both parents and children with 'common ground for listening and discussion' (1945 in Oswell, 2002, p. 25). Indeed, the ideal item of *Children's Hour* content was 'ageless' (1927, R11/27/2). Creating 'family' content that appeals to both adults (especially women) and children is a trope of children's broadcasting. Mothers (and to a lesser extent fathers) are often perceived as the gatekeepers to children's culture. Despite being aimed at eleven to fifteen year olds, the BBC's religious radio show *For the Children* had a stated aim of appealing to the mother as 'the principal agent in children's religious formation' (Parker, 2013). The content of *Sesame Street* in the late 1960s was formulated on the premise of mother and child watching together (Garlen and Graham, 2009). The survival and popularity of many nursery rhymes has been attributed to the fact that they were remembered and passed on by young female kindergarten staff to whom themes of courtship and sex were appealing (Roberts, 2005).

The form and content of *Children's Hour* were informed by strict moral codes communicated to producers and presenters by D.G.s and managers. The show was designed to encourage 'fair play, pride of country, personal cleanliness, good manners, thrift, 'safety first', sympathy with animals and birds, tidiness in public spaces, respect for the aged, self-restraint, etc.' (The BBC's first Director of Education, J.C. Stobart, R11/27/2). Initial fears that children's radio listening would lead to illiteracy, passivity and noise addiction (Croome, 1949, in Oswell, 2002, p. 26; Hartley, 1983, p. 28) were countered by community-focused activity in the form of clubs (Radio Circle, Radio Sunbeams, etc.), and concerts. Printed annuals also accompanied the radio shows as an early form of merchandising. The Radio Sunbeams had to promise to 'keep cheerful and healthy ... bring delight into the lives of other children ... be kind to animals ... look for beauty in books [and] pictures' and 'certainly not throw any rubbish ... into the streets about my home'

(R11/58). Indeed, it was 'the business of Broadcasting to civilise' and 'raise the standard of culture' in young listeners whilst 'developing the imaginative faculty in children' (R11/27/2). A six-page directive from 1924 sums up the BBC's philosophy on children's broadcasting for the next three decades or more. Radio shows for children should foster 'the building of character' through the appreciation of 'beauty in form' because 'beauty spells happiness, and happiness develops character and character makes a good citizen' (Corbett-Smith, R11/58). Qualities viewed by BBC directors as 'indispensable' include 'lightness, spontaneity and brevity' along with 'high comedy and joy of life' (R11/58). However, morality and didacticism had to be covert, delivered best through 'example in song and story rather than by formal exhortations' (J.C. Stobart in Oswell, 2002, p. 31). McCulloch felt that his duties as a broadcaster to children included the need to 'inculcate the Christian principles of love of God and their neighbour' (1946, cited in Oswell, 2002, p. 26). Childhood piety and 'the Christianising of the nation' were encouraged through drama, sketches and 'Joan and Betty' stories on religious show *For the Children* (Parker, 2013, p. 3). Hymns⁴⁶ and Christian Christmas songs frequently appeared in the playlists of *Children's Choice* in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The strategy needed to deliver Reith's moral, religious and educational philosophies required the careful selection of music. *Children's Hour* creator J.C. Stobart suggested that 'the melodies and the rhythm should be simple, and the contrast well marked' and the 'simple and pointed' songs of Schubert were deemed perfect, as were songs about 'streams, or fairies, or ghosts or any other imaginary attraction' (R11/27/2). Every *Children's Hour* should contain 'some good yet tuneful music with an occasional piece of lighter popular and musical comedy music' (Artistic director, Major A. Corbett-Smith, 1924, R11/58). The high cultural intentions of the programme were justified thus: 'a child who early learns the loveliness and purity of a Mozart minuet will not in later years be content with "We have no bananas"'. He has learnt the difference between gold and tarnished tinsel' (R11/58). For children's ears, the corporation recommended 'comic opera' and 'opera bouffe'. However, it was suggested that whilst jazz may have many good

⁴⁶ Hymns broadcast on *Children's Choice* include 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring', 'Onward Christian Soldiers', 'Old Rugged Cross', 'Loving Shepherd of thy Sheep'.

tunes, 'the words are usually drivel, often indecent' (R11/58). Reith expressed ambiguous and often contradictory attitudes towards the value of entertainment in communicating his vision. Popular music styles such as music hall and jazz took decades to gain mainstream acceptance on the station (Oswell, 2002, p. 29).

4.2 *Children's Choice*: Educational fun for all the family

Children's Choice was broadcast on Saturday mornings from January 1953 to the early 1980s. The show rebranded as *Children's Favourites* in 1954 and *Junior Choice* in the late 1960s⁴⁷ attracting audiences of up to seventeen million at its peak (*Radio Rewind*, 2014) and a host of top-flight presenters such as Derek McCulloch, Peter Brough, Christopher Trace, Leslie Crowther, Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart and Tony Blackburn. The use of a single presenter, the request show format, and the exclusive use of gramophone records (rather than live musicians) set *Children's Choice* apart from the BBC's previous attempts at broadcasting for children.

Children's Choice featured a number of recordings that seem to have been created for younger listeners. Although intentionality can be highly subjective, analysis of the playlists from the first decade of *Children's Choice* suggests that only around 10-15% of the songs were created with children as their primary audience rather than for a wider, more inclusive family audience, based their overall CMQ scores. Songs such as 'I taught I taw a puddy tat' by Mel Blanc, 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' by Henry Hall and 'Sparky's Magic Piano' by Henry Blair rank among *Children's Choice's* most frequently broadcast recordings, yet their overall CMQ scores, and hence, their child-friendliness varies a good deal (the songs score 83%, 59%, 57% respectively). Predicting the musical tastes of young children in the 1950s and selecting songs that they would find suitable and engaging remained largely a matter of guesswork. Audience research and the application of developmental and educational psychology were in their infancy and Reith actively resisted their use. Yet through the repeated playlisting of certain songs, lyrical tropes emerged: anthropomorphosised animals, nature, family, child protagonists, comedy and

⁴⁷ For ease and clarity, I have (mostly) used the original name (*Children's Choice*) to refer to the programme through the 1950s until its second rebrand as *Junior Choice* in 1967. Between 1954 and 1967 the show was known as *Children's Favourites*.

nonsense. Favoured musical attributes included major keys, perfect cadences and short melodic ranges. Some songs featured children (mostly girls rather than boys) singing. Representational sound effects and exotic, novelty instrumentation were common. Popular *Children's Choice* selections by The Chipmunks, Pinky and Perky, and later, The Smurfs and David Bowie ('The Laughing Gnome') featured high-pitched voice characterisation, the result of studio manipulation.

Adults masquerading as children, or animals, or both, through lyrics, music and child-like vocalisation frames the child as a recipient of enforced notions of childhood, focalising the listener to empathise with the songs' characters and messages. Nodelman sees the dissemination of such child-intended texts as a contributory factor to how children learn to be a child. Children begin to formulate their 'childlikeness' from exposure to texts from which they glean less knowledge and understanding than an adult (Nodelman, 2008, p. 22). This 'awareness of innocence' informs children's understanding of how wider society perceives them as children. Such multi-layered texts not only characterise children's culture, but inform childhood itself as a cultural construction. Children's increasing awareness that the products made 'for them' are somehow different (lacking, diminished, simpler) from those of adults compounds their sense of childness and their socio-cultural differentiation. The characteristics of children's recordings quickly become expectations; to create music for children, producers simply followed the rules of the 'genre'. Repetition on programmes such as *Children's Choice* compounds the differentiation; recordings intended for children became self-defining. *Children's Choice* songs of the '50s and early '60s portray children as naughty ('My Brother' by Terry Scott), lost ('I've lost my mummy' by Rolf Harris) and confused ('Hello Mudder Hello Father' by Allan Sherman). Good and evil are often clearly defined in children's songs and there is a clear moral stance in *Children's Choice* favourites about cowboys and Indians ('*The Cherokees captured me. They look mad. Things look bad*' from 'Three wheels on my wagon' by the New Christie Minstrels), 'Robin Hood' by Dick James ('*feared by the bad, loved by the good*'), 'The little engine that could' by Burl Ives (work hard and persevere) and 'The Ugly Duckling' by Danny Kaye (embrace difference). Narratives often resolve and endings are frequently

happy. However, a number of *Children's Choice* songs (for example, 'Hole in the Ground' by Bernard Cribbins) subvert these expectations. By avoiding stereotypical representations of children and leaving endings unresolved, individual texts are left open to interpretation thus empowering young listeners.

In line with the policies and ideologies developed by the BBC in the previous thirty years, *Children's Choice* was designed for family consumption, with the titular child framed being within a domestic intergenerational setting. The aggregated family audience for *Children's Choice* was encouraged in three specific ways. Firstly, there was a large amount of cross over with the playlists of other intergenerational radio shows such as *Housewives' Choice*, *Music for Everyone* and *Family Favourites*. Secondly, *Children's Choice* regularly broadcast a range of 'older' music, such as recordings from the three decades before the show was launched (1920s to the 1950s), and versions of songs that pre-dated recording technology. Traditional folk songs, classical music, recordings of Victorian music hall songs were all included to attract and sustain an older listenership. Lastly, the show featured a significant number of songs with 'adult' content, revealing a particular ideology of childhood on the part of the BBC whilst maintaining interest for older family members.

4.2.1 The cross-over appeal of Children's Choice

In the early 1950s, the BBC made extensive use of 'mixed programming' in an attempt to forge shared experiences across the generations, and develop stronger communities. As such, the playlist of *Children's Choice* was broad and eclectic. A typical 1950s edition featured nursery rhymes, hymns, spirituals, comedy songs and military bands alongside the latest hits by stars such as Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Max Bygraves and Al Martino. Cowboy songs mixed with Scottish folk dances; music hall sing-a-longs flanked classical symphonies; television themes and cartoon spin-offs sat alongside Alpine yodels and stirring polkas. As a request show, *Children's Choice* offered a semblance of democracy (Barnard, 1989, p. 25) although the selection and rejection of song choices by the show's producers served to perpetuate the BBC's views on children and their role as family members.

The show was broadcast on Saturday mornings from 09:00 until 09:55⁴⁸ when all family members were (theoretically) free to listen. In the 1950s, only an affluent minority could afford more than one radio so *Children's Choice* (and most other BBC shows at the time) was designed for communal consumption. The conscious and considered selection of listening material by audiences was encouraged. Active, selective and non-distracted listening was considered part of active citizenship (Oswell, 2002, p. 34). The extensive crossover of recordings between *Children's Choice* and *Housewives' Choice* is notable. The two shows not only shared a theme tune⁴⁹ but appeared interchangeably on Saturday schedules well into 1954. The mother (and housewife) was central to the BBC's idealised family of the 1950s. Mothers were targeted by the corporation as gatekeepers of children's morality and spirituality and were encouraged to train their children as active and attentive listeners (Oswell, 2002, p. 36). Playlists on both shows featured an eclectic mix of genres and eras, although the vocal and orchestral pop of chart stars such as Bing Crosby, Al Martino, Guy Mitchell, Frank Sinatra, Vera Lynn, Max Bygraves and the Stargazers dominated early editions.⁵⁰ In line with BBC policy, both programmes featured at least one classical or operatic recording (Puccini, Grieg, Handel) as well as numerous songs from musicals (*South Pacific*, *Annie get your gun*, the latest Danny Kaye film). By modern standards, *Children's Choice* and *Housewives' Choice* are poorly defined by the demographic of their target audience. The advantages of segmented marketing to specific ages, genders and interests had barely been considered by the BBC in the mid 1950s. After decades of resistance, the corporation had only recently embraced detailed audience research, preferring to promote a 'top-down' educative, class-based agenda well into the 1960s (Kumar, 1986, p. 59; Oswell, 2002, p. 41).

Saturdays on the Light Programme featured more family-friendly crossover in the form of the afternoon's *Family Favourites*⁵¹ and the evening's *Music for Everybody*

⁴⁸ Initially the show ran from 09:10 until around 09:55. Religious show *Five to Ten* followed for the next 14 years until the creation of Radios 1 and 2 in 1967, at which point *Junior Choice* expanded to two hours (08:00 to 10:00).

⁴⁹ 'In Party Mood' by the West End Celebrity Orchestra.

⁵⁰ U.K. sales charts for gramophone records started in 1952, the year before *Children's Choice*.

⁵¹ Broadcast from 14:00, *Family Favourites* was 'a programme of gramophone records' with an eclectic family-friendly playlist. Early editions featured popular songs from the 1920s (Al Jolson's 'I'm sitting on the top of the world'), contemporary Big Band music ('Vanessa' by the Ted Heath Orchestra), songs from recent musicals (*Show Boat*'s 'Make Believe'), children singing

(live renditions of operetta, film songs, pop and music hall). The eclecticism of the playlists and similarity of the content of the four programmes highlights the BBC's intentions of broadening audiences tastes (especially into 'high-brow' classical music and opera) whilst encouraging listening as a whole-family activity. The contemporary popular music broadcast by the BBC at this time tended to be light and melodic. Highly rhythmic and syncopated styles such as jazz and rhythm and blues are notable by their absence. At a time when teenage consumerism and its attendant cultural categorisation was in its infancy, the playlists reveal the cross-generational popularity of artists such as Frankie Laine, Danny Kaye, Paul Robeson, Billy Cotton, Ted Heath, Al Jolson, Les Paul, The Andrews Sisters and Kay Starr. The 'bland homogeneity' of mid-twentieth century radio has been noted (Medovoi, 2005, p. 97). In the USA, the sound of Tin Pan Alley was broadcast to a target audience of middle-class families (Garafolo, in Medovoi, 2005, p. 97). Live performances of the hits of the day by big bands and session singers dominated the airwaves. However, working-class musical forms, such as music hall, vaudeville, regional folk music and other 'ethnic' styles became increasingly included in radio playlists. Medovoi notes that 'domesticity ... was imagined as a condition in which private and public situations interpenetrated one another, where family life intersected with forms of urban or rural sociability that might involve class, ethnic, and racial relations of difference' (2005, p. 97). The musical crossover between *Children's Choice* and the other BBC shows was just one method of encouraging Reith's public-facing domesticity.

4.2.2 Older recordings: Wartime songs, folk, classical and music hall

Children's Choice attracted older family members by including songs that date from the earliest days of recording and many songs composed in the nineteenth century. Wartime songs such as 'Hey Little Hen' by Harry Roy and 'Run Rabbit Run' by Flanagan and Allen were staples of the first decade of *Children's Choice*. Playlist

religious songs ('Count your blessings' by The Luton Girls Choir; 'Nymphs and Shepherds' by the Manchester Children's Choir) and the obligatory classical pieces (Tchaikovsky's 'Symphony No.5 in E minor'; Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf').

analysis suggests that recordings that span the two World Wars (1914-1945) were broadcast more frequently on *Children's Choice* in the 1950s than songs contemporary with the year of broadcast. *Children's Choice* was launched only seven years after the end of World War Two. Many of the show's young listeners were conceived and born following the return of the troops. By the mid-1950s, representations of The War frequently appeared in films and TV shows and the accompanying music proved popular on *Children's Choice*. The musical themes of *The Dam Busters* (1955), *Cockleshell Heroes* (1955) and *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957⁵²) made regular appearances whilst The Band of the Coldstream Guards' 'Marching through the Commonwealth'⁵³ and 'A life on the ocean wave' by the Band of the Royal Marines reminded listeners young and old of Britain's Imperialist maritime past. Traditional English,⁵⁴ Scottish⁵⁵ and Celtic⁵⁶ folk songs were also popular on *Children's Choice*, as was 'world' music from countries such as South America, Jamaica, Spain and Germany⁵⁷ and a number of U.K.-derived parodies (a range of Italian-themed songs,⁵⁸ for example). Melodies familiar to older listeners such as 'Country Garden', 'Molly Malone' and 'The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond' helped to maintain full-family consumption of the show.

The cowboy craze that swept the U.K. in the late 1950s and early '60s led to a large number of Western (and later Country and Western) songs appearing on what was by now known as *Children's Favourites*. At its peak in around 1961, more than 20% of the show's playlists were made up of songs associated with cowboys. American Hollywood stars ('singing cowboys') such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers provided strong male role models for British baby boomers and were marketed to a young audience (Gould, 2012). With U.K. annual cinema visits of over 1 billion through the late '50s (Harari, 2014), cowboy songs from films such as *Calamity Jane* (1953), *Oklahoma* (1955), *The Man from Laramie* (1955) and *The Big Country* (1958) proved

⁵² Although the 'Colonel Bogey March' dates back to the eve of World War One (1914).

⁵³ 'Marching through the Commonwealth' was a medley of tunes from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

⁵⁴ English folk tunes on the show include 'Greensleeves' and 'Country Gardens'.

⁵⁵ The music of Scottish BBC presenters Jimmy Shand and Andy Stewart was played regularly.

⁵⁶ Such as 'Cockles and Mussels'.

⁵⁷ 'World Music' included on the show includes 'Bell Bird' by Trio Les Paraguayos, 'Andaluza' written by Granados, 'The Banana Boat song' by Harry Belafonte, 'Oh my Pa Pa' by Lys Assia and 'The Happy Wanderer' by the Oberkirchen Children's Choir.

⁵⁸ Such as 'Don't Ringa Da Bell' by Barbara Lyon and Ronnie Harris, 'Hotta Choccolotta' by Dave King and the Keynotes, 'Poppa Piccolino' Petula Clark with Children of Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

popular with the BBC's radio audiences. Songs in the cowboy genre remained popular on the programme until well into the 1970s with 'The Ballad of Davy Crockett' by Gary Miller, 'The Yellow Rose of Texas' by Mitch Miller and 'Three wheels on my wagon' by the New Christy Minstrels all being canonised by the show. Published in 1912 and released in 1959, 'Ragtime Cowboy Joe' by David Seville and The Chipmunks is a good example of how an adult product (in this case a 47-year-old song) could be redesigned and marketed to children, a practice frequently used by more-recent children's culture creators. The tempo-manipulated 'animal' vocals, and the addition of studio-based Foley sound effects (gun shots and horses) help to achieve a high 83% in the Sonics category of the CMQ whilst the short melodic intervals and dominance of I, IV, V chords contribute to an 83% in Music. Its aural attraction thus assured the song unsurprisingly became a regular on *Children's Choice*. Yet, the song's lyrics score much lower, only 55%. The third person description of the 'high-faluting, scooting, shooting son of a gun from Arizona' sits in opposition to the sedate, domesticated morality of a good deal of children's music from this period, and seems to contrast with Reith's family values. However, songs with heroic, adult protagonists of flexible morality ('Robin Hood' by Dick James and 'The ballad of Davy Crockett' by Fess Parker, for example) frequent the playlists of *Children's Choice* in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These escapist male-dominated fantasies seem to echo the violence of the World War so recent in the public consciousness and offer an alternative to the female-centred home lives of most post-war children in the U.K. There is a definite hint of anti-authoritarianism in the Chipmunks' version of 'Ragtime Cowboy Joe'. Seville's increasingly-exasperated requests for Alvin to stop shooting at things and 'put that gun down!' fall on deaf ears. Such incidents empower the child; Alvin's errant (and potentially-deadly) behaviour is untethered from parental rules. Such breaches in parental authority are rare in children's recordings of the period ('My Brother' by Terry Scott, 1962, being another notable exception). Delivered in a comedic setting, 'Ragtime Cowboy Joe' employs the music hall formula described in chapter three whereby child-friendly music is coupled with adult lyrics. With its sophisticated wordplay, use of internal rhyme, occasional alliteration and smattering of four syllable words ('on a horse who is syncopated gaited, and with such a funny meter to the roar of his

repeater'), 'Ragtime Cowboy Joe' is a multi-layered text containing musical and lyrical elements attractive to both children and adults. However, any brief suggestion of childhood anarchy in the lyrics is tempered by conventional melodic and harmonic backing. The ever-present 'hidden' adults are always in control.

Reith's higher ideals of civilising the wider public from the family unit outwards are evident in the inclusion in *Children's Choice* playlists of classical, folk and what would today be known as world music. The BBC saw broadcasting to 'the poor' as part of their public service remit (Oswell, 2002, p. 35) and children's programming was designed as 'a happy alternative to the squalor of the streets and backyards' for working-class families (Reith, p. 35). Radio shows such as *Children's Choice* were thought to help to 'banish ignorance and misery' allowing poor children (and their accompanying adult family members) to 'contribute richly ... to the sum total of human well-being' (Reith in Kumar, 1986, p. 52). Producers and programme makers upheld Reithian values by giving the public 'not what it wanted, or thought it wanted, but what was considered good for it' (Kumar, 1986, p. 54). To this end, classical music from operas, ballets and symphonies played a large⁵⁹ part in *Children's Choice* until around 1963. Classical pieces with rural or animal themes proved especially popular as did pieces with geographical themes. As discussed elsewhere (p. 80, Animal themes are a recurring trope of children's music. Animal-themed songs from the 1930s such as 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf' by Henry Hall, 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' by Frank Luther and 'The Bee Song' by Arthur Askey were all *Children's Choice* favourites. A *Children's Choice* favourite, 'Sparky's Magic Piano' (1948) combined classical music with storytelling and spawned a range of themed follow-ups, such as 'Sparky's Music Mix-Up' (1949) and 'Sparky's Magic Baton' (1954). Disney's *Silly Symphonies* (1929) and *Fantasia* (1940) were frequently mined by *Children's Choice* for their classical content. Indeed, Walt's educational and moral impulses have much in common Reith's family values. The regularly requested 'Tubby the Tuba' by Danny Kaye (Decca 1945) is an excellent example of how classical music could be combined with an educational and entertaining story

⁵⁹ The 'Flight of the Bumble Bee' (Rimsky-Korsakov), 'The Waltzing Cat' (Florian Zab), 'Peter and the Wolf' (Prokofiev) and 'The Little Red Monkey' are good example of animal-themed Classical pieces included despite their musical complexity. Geographical classical pieces on *Children's Choice* include 'Andaluza' (Granados) 'Swedish Rhapsody' by Percy Faith (based on a theme by Alfven).

with comical voices, animal characters and strong use of prosody adding to its child-friendliness.

Whilst classical, military, world and folk music proliferated on *Children's Choice*, Contemporary Pop (songs broadcast within a year of their release) accounted for only 5-10% of the playlists through 1950s. Light and melodic ('easy listening') songs of American origin predominate. Smartly dressed, clean-cut 'family' entertainers provided unthreatening romantic interest for older audience members and responsible role models for children. Lord Reith saw American mass culture of the 1930s and 1940s as a threat to British middle-class family values; in the 1920s he discussed how entertainment 'quickly grows tame' resulting in 'dissatisfaction and boredom' (Oswell, 2002, pp. 29-30). Reith's dilemma was to balance educational, life-enhancing content (the BBC already had a specific remit for broadcasting in schools) with programmes that engaged audiences yet did not pander to the mass-produced, overly-commercialised 'pure' entertainment that he saw in a good deal of American music (Oswell, 2002, p. 32). D.G.s of the 1950s such as Ian Jacob and Hugh Greene were more willing to embrace diversity in the form of contemporary popular music in an attempt to modernise the BBC (Tracey, 1998, p. 71). However, the popularity of American rhythm and blues, and rock'n'roll from the mid to late 1950s was barely recognised by *Children's Choice*; key artists such as Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Fats Domino were simply not broadcast. Despite the racially-mixed origins of rock'n'roll, BBC playlists remained overwhelmingly white. Nods to the less threatening end of the genre come in the form of 'This Ole House' by Rosemary Clooney, broadcast in April 1956 and 'See you later, Alligator' by Bill Haley and the Comets in February 1958, both two years after their initial releases. Despite a few exceptions,⁶⁰ jazz records were not broadcast on the programme in the 1950s, the genre being considered 'too adult' by policy makers (PAB3/281-282). *Children's Choice* was also slow to embrace the relatively 'safe' and, by that time, retro British 'trad jazz' boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s despite clarinettist Acker Bilk having his own BBC radio show. Seemingly more acceptable was skiffle, the

⁶⁰ Among the few jazz records played were Fats Waller's 'Alligator Crawl' (20 years old when it was broadcast in April 1954), the close harmony swing of 'Fuzzy Wuzzy' by Milt Herle and the Jesters (released in 1945) and Max Bygraves' version of the Mills Brothers' 'The Jones Boy'.

energetic British take on American folk-blues. Records by Lonnie Donegan, Chas McDevit and Don Lang (his 'Six-Five Special' was a BBC TV theme at the time) were regulars. Indeed, *Saturday Skiffle Club* followed *Children's Favourites* on the schedule from January 1958. The show rebranded as *Saturday Club* in October that year featuring live sessions and recordings by contemporary British pop stars (most notably The Beatles) and American rock'n'rollers (Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran).

4.2.3 *Adult themes in child-friendly wrapping*

Many of the songs featured on *Children's Choice* originate either from the heyday of music hall⁶¹ (mid to late 1800s) or exemplify the 'music hall formula' detailed in the previous chapter (p. 95). Recordings from the 1920s, such as 'The Laughing Policeman' by Charles Penrose (recorded in 1922 with a tune that dates back to the 1890s) and 'The Runaway Train' by Vernon Dalhart (1925) were also frequently broadcast during the show's three decades. Despite being atypical of most children's music with its use of the minor key, complex meter and an absence of a chorus/refrain, 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' by Henry Hall (1932) was a staple on the show. In the conservative British 1950s, the instrumentation, vocal delivery and lyrics ('see them gaily gad about') must have seemed archaic to children on the cusp of an American invasion of TV detectives, Coca-Cola and rock'n'roll, yet their nostalgic appeal to adults is central to the BBC's aim of creating whole-family listening experiences. Original music hall songs and decades-old recordings were supplemented with more-recent pastiche creations such as 1953's '(How much is that) Doggie in the window?' by Lita Roza⁶² and various versions of 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts' (1949/50⁶³); the post-modernist tendencies and commercial

⁶¹ Music hall songs featured on the show include 'Forty Fahsend Feathers on a Frush' (1929), 'If you were the only girl in the world' (1916) and 'The Toy Makers Dream' Debroy Somers (1929). BBC radio presenter Billy Cotton often recreated music hall tunes for recordings and for his own show in the 1950s. Contemporary actors, presenters, comedians and variety artists (Rolf Harris, Ken Dodd, Bernard Cribbins, Tommy Cooper) included music hall songs in their recorded output. For example, 'Any Old Iron' by Peter Sellers in 1957 was popular on *Children's Choice*.

⁶² The first UK number one single by a female artist.

⁶³ Hit versions of the song were released in 1949 by Freddy Martin and his Orchestra and in 1950 by Danny Kaye.

opportunities of musical nostalgia were evident even in the immediate post-War years.

In keeping with its aim of 'family' broadcasting in the 1950s, *Children's Choice* not only included songs popular with previous generations, but regularly broadcast material with decidedly 'adult' lyrical content. 'Don't jump off the roof Dad' by Tommy Cooper (Palette, 1961) perhaps best exemplifies this combination of age-signifying tropes. The low density of syllables, repetitive chord pattern and uncluttered scale wise melody are child-friendly and score 83% on the CMQ for Music. The words have mostly one and two syllables. The tone is conversational and Cooper's seemingly irrepressible laughter suggests that the song is humorous (CMQ of 64% for Lyrics). However, the narrative of the song, in which children encourage their father to perform an alternative method of suicide because jumping from the roof will damage mum's flower bed and upset her is decidedly adult. Many aspects of the music and lyrics bear the hallmarks of age-inclusivity whilst the themes (stressful employment, gardening, suicide) point to the song's intentions of engaging adults.

Similarly, the combination of high and low cultural signifiers (operetta, received pronunciation, music hall) in 'The Hippopotamus Song (Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud)' by Flanders and Swann (Parlophone, 1957) ensured the song's popularity with the Reithian BBC of the 1950s. Musically, this operetta-pastiche is cultural, educational and age-inclusive. The melodic and anthemic 'sing-along' choruses use perfect rhyme (mud/blood, follow/hollow/wallow), well-defined short phrases and words of one or two syllables, which aid the vocal participation of listeners of all ages. The chorus of 'The Hippopotamus Song' features a highly-rhythmic dactylic tetrameter.

Mud, Mud, glorious mud.
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood.
So follow me, follow down to the hollow
And there let us wallow in glorious mud

In contrast, the lyrical and musical complexity of the verses position the child as a passive recipient of the music, rather than a vocal participant whilst adult themes of

lusty courtship, 'garters' and 'inamoratas' engage grown-up listeners:

The fair Hippopotama he aimed to entice
From her seat on that hilltop above
As she hadn't got a Ma to give her advice
Came tiptoeing down to her love.
Like thunder the forest re-echoed the sound
Of the song that they sang when they met
His inamorata adjusted her garter
And lifted her voice in duet ...

Five syllable words such as 'inamorata' and 'Hippopotama' and a long minor chord sequence are uncommon in children's music. The vocal range of the song is an octave and a minor third (fifteen semitones); a further octave is spanned with the use of falsetto on the second chorus (making twenty-seven semitones in all). The largest sequential vocal interval is an octave. This compares with an average vocal range of just eleven semitones and a largest sequential interval of five semitones in the children's folk songs of Woody Guthrie. Simplicity and complexity, knowingness and innocence combine in 'The Hippopotamus Song' ensuring its intergenerational attraction.

'Hole in the Ground' by Bernard Cribbins (Parlophone, 1962) scores a high 92% for Music with its perfect cadences, high tempo, major key, and scale-wise melodies. The use of novelty sound effects, a clear lead vocal high in the mix, and high-pitched instrumentation result in 67% for Sonics, whilst Lyrics also scores a reasonable 64% for the visual, comedic theme, short discreet phrases, strong use of rhyme, etc. A strong overall CMQ of 76% for this song offers some insight into why producers of a children's radio show found the recording attractive for broadcast and why audience members both young and old found the song endearing. However, the textual attractiveness belies the fact that attempts by the song's narrator to deal with class conflict end with a murder and a burial. Similarly, 'Two Little Boys' by Rolf Harris (1969) scores a healthy 75% for Music and a high 82% for its Lyrics about children, horses and toys delivered in simple, rhyme-heavy language. Child protagonists (voiced by Harris) deliver a nostalgic morality tale accompanied by

sentimental music and emotive vocal accompaniment (note the use of *ritardando* before Harris' voice breaks on the pay-off line 'Do you think I would leave you *dying*').

A final example of the music hall formula is 'In the middle of the house' by British singer Alma Cogan (HMV, 1956). The child-friendly music and production (CMQ scores of 100% for Music and 83% for Sonics) seem at odds with the lyrics in which the first-person narrator boasts of how she and her family murder the bill collector and an annoying relative before they themselves seem to commit suicide at the song's finale.

The cultural construction of innocence is central to an understanding of childhood and, by default, adulthood. The BBC's aim of bringing families together in a shared listening experience was achieved through the selection of songs in the music hall formula broadcast on *Children's Choice*. To the BBC, humour and music deployed in a supportive, intergenerational setting allowed children to start dealing with grown-up themes of mortality, sexuality and the 'real life' world of the adults that they would inevitably become.

4.2.4 Changes in the early 1960s

The dramatic rise in the popularity of television through the 1950s led to an equally dramatic fall in the BBC's radio listenership.⁶⁴ Resulting budgetary restrictions caused the company to gradually replace large and expensive live bands with gramophone records. As U.K. consumer spending began to increase (on the recently-developed 45 rpm record, for example) new outlets for advertising were required. With the emergence of Independent Television (ITV) in 1955 and the rise in popularity of British-owned Radio Luxembourg⁶⁵ the BBC's status as a public service broadcaster came under severe scrutiny.

Yet, with the broadcasting industries in a state of flux and with radio audiences rapidly fading, the BBC was producing some of its most endearing family-friendly

⁶⁴ TV licenses increased from 350,000 in 1950 to over nine million by 1960 whilst radio listenership fell from around nine million in 1949 to 3.5 million by 1958 (Crisell, 1997, p. 76).

⁶⁵ Rock'n'roll pioneer Alan Freed presented a show on Radio Luxembourg at this time.

shows. *Hancock's Half Hour*, for example, was more popular with children aged 12 to 14 than with adults in 1959 (R9/25/1). Many of the songs most closely associated with *Children's Choice* were created and broadcast around this time. The Goons ('childlike anarchy ... overlaid with the whiff of something less innocent'; Black, 1972, cited in Crisell, 1997, p. 70) were among a host of British radio and television stars making novelty and comedy records at this time. Among the actors, comedians, variety performers and 'family' entertainers who made records broadcast on the *Children's Choice* were Rolf Harris, Max Bygraves, Ken Dodd, Bernard Cribbins, Tommy Cooper, Frankie Howerd, Jimmy Savile, and Morecambe and Wise. In true music hall style, adult knowingness and child-friendly presentation combine in these intergenerational pantomimic songs.

Producer George Martin was a key figure in the creation of many of these recordings. His extensive credits⁶⁶ include *Children's Choice* favourites such as 'Nellie the Elephant' by Mandy Miller, 'Pickin' a Chicken' by Eve Boswell, and the aforementioned Dick James' 'Robin Hood' theme tune and 'Hippopotamus Song' by Flanders and Swann. Martin also produced 'Right Said Fred' by Bernard Cribbins (Parlophone, 1962). Like many other of Martin's novelty productions, 'Right Said Fred' has many child-friendly elements such as the frequent use of representational sound effects and a clear, unaccompanied lead vocal which is prominent in the mix. The tempo is high whilst six frenetic verses and two quick middle-eights are packed into the song's brief two minutes and twenty-one seconds. The title line repeats frequently and a tone-up modulation towards the end adds to the aural interest resulting in a CMQ score of 92% for Music. However, the song scores only 45% for Lyrics. The song has no chorus; the title line and 'so we had a cup of tea' are the only repeated phrases in the song. The complex meter, large vocal range of seventeen semitones, flurry of syllables and occasional use of a six four bar in a four four song all tend to position the audience as listeners rather than participants. Moving large pieces of furniture is hardly a concern for children yet the destruction

⁶⁶ A full list of George Martin's pre-Beatles productions has proved hard to find. Among his productions broadcast on *Children's Favourites* are 'Goodness Gracious Me' by Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren, records by Spike Milligan ('Purple Aeroplane', 'Ning Nang Nong') and Michael Bentine, records by Rolf Harris ('I've lost my mummy', 'Jake the Peg', 'Sun Arise'), 'My Boomerang' by Charley Drake, 'My Brother' by Terry Scott, 'Little boy fishing' by Shirley Abicair, and songs by Bernard Cribbins ('Hole in the road'), The Luton Girls Choir and Jimmy Shand.

that ensues, and the potentially fatal accident involving Charlie ('half a ton of rubble landed on the top of his dome') accompanied by explosive sound effects, conveys some of the coded naughtiness of Victorian music hall.

A series of D.G.s perpetuated Reith's family values into the 1960s (Aitken, 2013, p. 50; Crisell, 1997, p. 68; Tracey, 1998, p. 67). William Haley (1944-52) was a staunch Reithian and resisted any pandering to popular tastes (Tracey, 1998, p. 67).

However, a string of young, innovative producers and managers began to redefine Reith's vision. Hugh Greene (D.G. from 1960) openly embraced the diversity of the BBC's audience and their tastes. The recent use of audience research had begun to reveal the true nature of the BBC's listenership and Greene celebrated the U.K.'s 'regional characteristics ... inflections [and] class differences' and felt that the BBC should represent 'the likes and dislikes of ordinary people' (1958 cited in Tracey, 1998, p. 91). Furthermore, he suggested that the BBC 'does not stand outside and apart from society. It has simply to respond as sensitively as it can to all the main currents of national life' (Tracey, 1998, p. 88). As the inclusion of classical, military, religious and world music became less frequently, Reithian didacticism began to fade. Rather than trying to educate the masses, Greene's aim of reflecting the cultural diversity of British life is reflected, in part, in the increasingly widespread use of regional accents in recordings and presenters. Received Pronunciation (RP: a development of the U.K.'s fee-paying public school system) was the *de facto* delivery style of the majority of the BBC's presenters up to that point (including *Children's Hour* and *Children's Choice* stalwart Derek McCulloch, AKA 'Uncle Mac'). RP and Standard English were so hegemonic at the BBC in the 1950s that they were considered by some to be 'non-accent' (Abercrombie, 1951, p. 221). George Martin's novelty recordings featuring actors such as Bernard Cribbins adopting regional accents seem integral to the BBC's effort to diversify. However, as noted previously, the 'vernacular' working-class styles of folk and music hall can be fetishised by well-meaning middle-class gatekeepers. Archivists, and, in this case, producers (middle class, public school educated, etc.) perpetuate often-exaggerated examples of working-class culture in specious attempts to document, categorise and disseminate their findings. Seen through the distorting lens of Reith, McCulloch,

Martin et al, the Cockney accents in *Children's Choice* regulars such as Tommy Steele's 'Little White Bull', Terry Scott's 'My Brother' or Bernard Cribbins' 'Right said Fred' become ideologically charged. Of particular note are a number of recordings in which the vocalist crosses barriers of race or religion in a form of aural minstrelsy. Accented *Children's Choice* recordings that raise questions of taste in the enlightened twenty-first century include 'Goodness Gracious Me' by Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren⁶⁷ (1960), 'Jake the Peg' by Rolf Harris⁶⁸ (1965), 'Thanks heavens for little girls' by Maurice Chevalier⁶⁹ (1957) or the calypsos and Jamaican songs voiced and composed by Lance Percival.

By the mid 1960s, the light and melodic pop of past decades was rapidly replaced by the contemporary pop of guitar-centred beat groups and pop vocalists. *Pop goes the Beatles* started on the Light Programme on 4 June 1963, with the teen-focused *Non Stop Pop* arriving shortly after on 5 July 1963 (R9/25/2). By 1963, popular music comprised approximately 45% of the typical *Children's Favourites* playlist with comedy, novelty and music hall songs accounted for around 12%. This is noteworthy due to the way in which the show has been represented on recent nostalgic compilations and radio shows.

In March 1964, *The Tommy Steele Show* replaced *The Billy Cotton Band Show* and by 1965 Uncle Mac had broadcast his final *Children's Favourites*. The links to the old guard and their traditional family values rapidly faded. On 17 January 1964, after forty-two years on the air, the BBC's first attempt at broadcasting for children, *Children's Hour* ended. By 1960, Assistant Director R. D'A. Marriott had conceded that the show was designed to appeal to the small minority of children who were 'most carefully brought up, in the best homes ... those of the highest educational potential ... the attentive and serious minded' (Oswell, 2002, pp. 43-44). Similar to *Go4it* in 2009, more adults than children were listening (Oswell, 2002, p. 24) and *Children's Hour's* audience was less than 1% of other BBC radio shows such as

⁶⁷ In 'Goodness Gracious Me', the white Sellers adopts an Indian accent. The song's title was recontextualised in the twenty-first century for a British-Asian comedy show.

⁶⁸ The narrator of 'Jake the Peg' describes various comedic and sometimes abusive scenarios that befall him for having three legs. The song ostensibly about difference and disability is voiced inexplicably by Harris in a Jewish accent.

⁶⁹ In the aftermath of the trials and convictions of BBC presenters Jimmy Savile, Rolf Harris and Stuart Hall, the song 'Thanks heavens for little girls' may be the least likely to appear on nostalgic *Children's Choice* reruns and compilations. 'I've never seen anything like it' by Rolf Harris comes a close second.

Children's Favourites, Saturday Club, The Billy Cotton Band Show and *Playtime* (1963, R34/1257). The same year, the separate departments for Children's and Women's Programming were merged to form one for Families (R34/1257) at which point a fundamental review of the BBC's children's programming on both radio and television took place (T31/324).

4.2.5 1967-83: Extra channels and new presenters

The rise in commercial television and the popularity of hip commercial radio stations such as Luxembourg (Williams, 1998, p. 105) and the offshore pirates led to a less formal presentation style on what was by the late 1960s called *Junior Choice*. Ex-pirate station DJ Ed Stewart ('hardly ever patronizing or condescending ... always friendly and cheerful'; R9/6/281) became the show's longest running presenter and broadcast to the show's largest audiences. In 1967, the BBC launched a new radio channel. Many shows on the existing Light Programme were transferred to the new Radio 2, whilst Radio 1 was designed to appeal to a more youthful audience through the broadcast of pop and rock, presented by many ex-pirate presenters. Initially, the number of recordings that the BBC could broadcast on the new stations was limited and, due to campaigns by the Musician's Union, the station received only two extra hours of 'needletime' (Crisell, 1997, p. 140). The BBC negotiated this situation by increasing the 'session' recordings of live bands, and broadcasting a number of shows simultaneously on both of the new stations, *Junior Choice* being one of them. There was a swift rise in the percentage of contemporary pop hits played, despite many of the old favourites remaining popular. An audience survey of listeners from 1967 indicates that Light Music, Military and Dance Music (mostly of the 1930s and 1940s) comprised 70% of the genres that were 'particularly liked' by respondents (R9/25/2). Pop tallied only 14%. In a display of increasing sophistication in their categorizing of musical genres, shows and audiences, the BBC began to differentiate between 'the latest pop tunes' and 'the more tuneful pop of recent years' in their surveys (LR/67/996). By the mid-1970s, less than 1% of five to fourteen year-olds were listening to the radio on a regular basis compared with 27% watching television (*Annual review of BBC audience research findings 1975/6, 1977*). As BBC

Radio's overall listening figures continued to fall, *Junior Choice* retained between four and five million listeners. It was the UK's most popular morning show and second only to Sunday evening's Top 40 chart run down in audience numbers (*Annual review of BBC audience research findings 1977/8, 1979; Annual review of BBC audience research findings 1980, 1981*). By the late 1970s, 76% of the BBC's radio listenership were identified as working class, a stark contrast to Reith's idealised middle class audience of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

After the 1960s, the BBC's archive of policy documents on children's radio broadcasting diminishes rapidly. The realms of pages of discussion on what constitutes a child and what content may be suitable for young listeners seems to dry up. As content for children moved rapidly to TV, decisions on children's radio programming seem to be increasingly informed by commercial constraints. Calls for the more 'pop' oriented stations (mostly Radio 1) to be funded by advertisements date back to the 1960s⁷⁰ (LR/67/996). By the late 1970s, Tony Blackburn replaced Ed Stewart as presenter. Despite one or two exceptions (the odd film theme or novelty record), *Junior Choice* in the 1980s (rebranded as *The Tony Blackburn Show* in its final incarnation) was comprised entirely of contemporary Top 40 pop music with little of interest for nostalgic parents and grandparents. Like *Children's Hour* in the 1920s, *The Tony Blackburn Show* reverted to the use of co-presenters (Keith Chegwin and Maggie Philbin among others) and included features about children, such as an interview with a seven-year-old Drew Barrymore (then the star of *E.T.*) in January 1983 and a 'Children in the News' feature.

4.3 Resurrecting *Children's Choice*: The commercialisation of adult nostalgia

Twenty-five years after its final broadcast, the BBC resurrected *Junior Choice*. Former presenter Ed Stewart returned to host a two hour-long version of the show in 2007 which has been broadcast annually each subsequent Christmas on Radio 2. In addition, a large number of *Children's Choice/Children's Favourites/Junior Choice*-themed compilations have been released in the twenty-first century. Analysis of the

⁷⁰ 73% of those polled suggested that Radio 1 should be funded through adverts.

recordings included on the new compilations and radio shows has allowed comparison with the show as originally broadcast. Specifically, 558 songs across twenty-nine CDs, online compilations and radio shows were analysed for frequency of appearance, year of release and other details (see Appendix 6). Considering the tens of thousands of recordings broadcast and the myriad genres represented on the original show, the song selections on CDs such as *Children's Favourites* (Platinum, 2003), *Hello Children Everywhere* (Hallmark, 2011) and *Childhood Days* (Telstar, 2003) are strikingly similar. A canon of recordings seems to have emerged through repetition on the show and the inclusion on subsequent compilations. 'Once established, canons exert cultural power by influencing memory and heritage and by radiating out on to the work of musicians. [They] influence the narration of the past, and they inspire the radius of creativity for the future' (Regev, 2006, p. 2). Cultural canonisation is a complex, fluid and often-unpredictable discursive process. The recent trials and convictions of some of the BBC's best-loved presenters, some of whom made records broadcast on *Children's Choice*, will undoubtedly influence the recordings selected and perpetuated by children's music gatekeepers in the future.

Yet, there are important ways in which the recent compilations misrepresent the original show. Far from revealing the most popular songs, in terms of frequency of broadcast, the new CDs and radio shows reveal a sentimentalised representation in which the distorting effects of nostalgia and issues of canonisation are evident. Nostalgia has recast the show as being more child-focused than originally broadcast: more exclusive than inclusive. Recordings that more consistently contain sonic markers of children and childhood have replaced the intergenerational nature of the shows' first decade and it is these more 'kiddified' songs that have come to dominate *Children's Choice* as reimagined by twenty-first century compilers. The use of adult content for purposes of full-family inclusion is still evident; 'In the middle of the house', 'Right said Fred', 'The Hippopotamus Song' and Bennie Hill's 'Ernie (The fastest milkman in the West)' (Columbia, 1971) are among the top 20 most canonised songs on the compilations. However, child-focused songs such as 'Nellie the Elephant' (the most compiled song), 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' and

'Buckingham Palace' dominate the upper reaches of the compiled chart. CMQ analysis reveals that it is the sonic impact of these recordings that seems to earmark them as having been created 'for children' rather than 'for families'. For example, 'Nellie the Elephant' scores 83% and 'Buckingham Palace' 100% on the CMQ for Sonics. The popularity of highly-enunciated female (and/or child) vocalists supplemented by high-pitched, high tessitura, often orchestrated instruments, such as flutes, xylophones and glockenspiels, suggests that intentionality was involved in the creation of these recordings and their selection has been informed, at least in part, by their aural signification of childhood.

However, overall, it appears that Music, rather than Lyrics or Sonics may be the most important category in the creation and selection of family-friendly material, whether for consumers of the modern compilations, or listeners to the original show. CMQ analysis of the ten most-compiled songs (see Appendix 7) reveals a mean average score of 90% for Music, compared with 59% for Lyrics and 57% for Sonics. Musicological elements of recordings seem to be those that most appeal to gatekeepers of children's culture. The crafting of accessible, melodic top lines and associated harmonic accompaniment through the use of particular audience-inclusive limitations (Dockray, 2005; Hopkin, 1984; Shehan, 1987) appears to be more persuasive than lyrical/narrative, or timbral/sonic factors. In other words, limiting the size of successive melodic intervals, and the overall melodic range, and manipulating other musical factors such as tempo, tonality and cadence creates music that is accessible (sing-able, listenable) to all ages, not just children. This seems to concur with my notions of a music hall formula whereby anthemic, participative music is used as a vehicle for a range of lyrical themes, many of them less than child-friendly. The dominance of CMQ musicological factors in many of the songs selected for the new CDs explains their appeal not only to the children of the 1950s, but to the adults they have grown into. As with all texts, listeners are able to actualise greater or lesser degrees of signification dependent on their levels of competence.

A listener's interpretation of the text is dependent on a number of factors that include the wider context and the medium via which the text is transmitted (see

Even-Zohar's *Polysystemic Studies* diagram in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 320). If, as I am suggesting, many of the recordings broadcast on *Children's Choice* were designed to be attractive to adults by the inclusion of 'adult' themes wrapped music accessible to all ages, then there seems little reason why adults who were children in the 1950s would not find them attractive now. The openness of the texts in question allows adults to bring their mature interpretive faculties to recordings such as 'Hole in the ground'; they may (or may not, depending on their childness and competence) more fully understand the reasons why the manual worker vented his murderous anger on the man in the bowler hat than children. The musical inclusivity of the recordings that brought enjoyment to the children they were in the 1950s and 1960s is also attractive to them as adults, although it is through the bitter-sweet lens of nostalgia that they are now engaging with the text.

Not only does the compiled version of *Children's Choice* include more childness, the recordings on average hail from a time period much earlier than that depicted by the original radio show. The release dates of the original recordings included in the compilations range from 1922 ('The Laughing Policeman') to 1980 ('Captain Beaky and his Band'⁷¹). However, the most popular songs (the forty-seven songs that appear on four or more compilations) have an average release date of May 1953, just five months after the original *Children's Choice* was first broadcast. This is much earlier than the show 'as broadcast' which, due to the large amount of contemporary pop included in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, would, at a guess, be somewhere in the early 1970s. It could be argued that the recent compilations deliberately focus on the Reithian 1950s, in order to engage consumers who heard the original shows as children and are now in their 60s or older. However, the inclusion of recordings such as 'There's no one quite like Grandma' by St. Winifred's School Choir (Music for Pleasure, 1980) and 'The Smurf Song' by Father Abraham and the Smurfs (Decca, 1978) indicates that certain songs from the show's later years have proved attractive to modern day compilers and producers. Both of these more-recent songs have a high overall CMQ score (76% for 'Grandma' and 86% for the Smurfs) suggesting that their inclusion chimes with the compiler's intentions of

⁷¹ It is unsurprising that 47% of the top 47 songs on the recent compilations contain animal themes, evidence of the continuing link between children and animals, and the depiction of children as animals.

presenting a more child-friendly selection than the original radio show. There is also some suggestion that 'There's no one quite like Grandma' and 'Captain Beaky and his band' (animals as family) have been selected for the strong sense of traditional family values in their lyrical themes.

The ten songs that appear most frequently on the compilations were further analysed (see Appendix 7). Firstly, and most noteworthy is the fact that the average date of release of these songs is August 1943 a full nine years before *Children's Choice* began, nearly ten years before the average of the top forty-seven songs and around thirty years before the average of the songs originally broadcast. Through the distorting lens of nostalgia and from a twenty-first century perspective, *Children's Choice* appears artificially old fashioned. Secondly, at least half of the top ten recordings use the music hall formula, and four of them employ music hall as a musical genre. With reference to the CMQ scores of the top ten compiled songs, 'In the middle of the house'⁷² (murder and suicide set to a jaunty swing beat) by British singer Alma Cogan (HMV, 1956) is the highest scoring (see page 113). The second highest scoring song is 'I taught I taw a puddy tat' (see page 101). Child-friendly music and lyrics combine with a comedy theme and extravagant voice characterisation. The song positions the child listener to empathise with Tweety Pie (small, innocent, in need of protection in the form of a cage and a human adult), who, in classic folk tale style (c.f. the spider Anansi, Br'er Rabbit, the mouse in *The Gruffalo*) always outwits the loud and large (adult) cat Sylvester.

Interestingly, one of the two joint lowest overall CMQ scores in the top ten songs was 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' (59%). Its complex structure and meter, two-octave melodic range, use of the minor key (in the verses) and a fifth-up modulation position the child as listener rather than vocal participant. This casts the song's status as a child-friendly text into question. However, adult nostalgia begins to explain its enduring popularity. As discussed in chapters six and seven, the commercial consumption of children's products by adults has grown symbiotically with children's participation as consumers. The rehashing of the youth-oriented

⁷² Cogan's version of 'In the middle of the house' was one of three simultaneously in the U.K. charts in 1956 and one of at least five versions released that year.

products of yesteryear is central to the creation and expansion of the adult nostalgia market. Nostalgia is now the 'incurable modern condition' (Boym, 2002, p. xiv) in which individuals yearn for elusive stability in a chaotic world, reimagining their childhood as 'a time of supposed tranquillity and assurance' (Jing, 2006, p. 360). The faster the pace of technological and social change, the greater society's longing for stability. The nostalgic yearning for familiarity is evident in the host of children's TV shows that have rebranded for a twenty-first century audience. New versions of BBC programs from as far back as the 1940s such as *Bill and Ben*, *Noddy*, *The Clangers*, *Sooty*, *Denis the Menace*, and *Danger Mouse* indicate the commercial incentives of nostalgia.

In the twenty-first century, the BBC's decision to hive off children's programming onto specialist channels appears to spell a return to a childhood defined by separation from adults. Yet the corporation's extensive use of interactive websites and social media blurs binary definitions of children's consumption and production, and empowers children in the process. The resurgence of 'family' programming in the form of *Strictly Come Dancing*, *The Great British Bake Off*, *Doctor Who* and *Robot Wars* indicates the blurring of age categories and the sharing of culture driven by nostalgia and many of the other drivers of infantilisation explored in chapter seven.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the BBC's role in communicating a range of discourses of childhood. Through the detailed analysis of a wide range of documentation and a close examination of recordings, it has explored how these ideologies have translated into the records selected for young ears and how these have, at times, created and dismantled cultural and hence social boundaries between children and adults. In the case of *Children's Choice*, it is evident that a complex interplay of contextual factors has influenced a number of conflicting discourses of childhood. The slow recovery of the U.K. after World War Two, the popularity of both transistor radios and television, the rise in the role of advertising and marketing, and the vision and power of individuals such as Lord Reith have all affected how

these childhoods manifested themselves musically. Reith's grand vision of educating the masses in order to forge closer families and stronger communities faded under commercial pressures during the 1960s and beyond. On analysis, Reith, McCulloch and the BBC's management were trying to balance a Romantic ideology of childhood innocence and separation with other potentially conflicting discourses that frame children as family members, active citizens and the 'little adults' of Ariès' Middle Ages. This conflict was being played out against a radically-altered and rapidly-changing post-war backdrop of rationing, one parent families, increasing consumerism and access to ideas and information via television that did much to change roles for women, the working-classes and children.

The discourse of innocence and naivety that formed part of *Children's Choice's* remit is also detectable in the similar playlists of *Housewives' Choice*, *Family Favourites*, *Music for Everyone* and other shows of the day. It could be argued that the pre-digital, pre-sexualised 1950s childhood, defined by strictly-demarcated roles for adult gatekeepers (parents and teachers) in the years before the 'birth' of the teenager, were a time of innocence and separation, something of a 'golden age' of childhood. Yet Reith's policies reveal a middle class bias indicating the existence of multiple childhoods at similar historical moments. Although Reith's vision does not fall comfortably into either a Romantic or Evangelical childhood, it does indicate the ways in which active intervention from adults can create childhoods defined by age inclusion as well as exclusion. The study also indicates the power of adult nostalgia to shape generation after generation of childhood.

The investigation exposed a little known or rarely considered area of study, and revealed a number of hidden histories, not just of children but a little about housewives and their conception as family members. As such, it has provided further evidence of adults' role in the shaping of childhood. The childhood suggested by *Children's Choice* contrasts with the earlier *Children's Hour* and to that suggested by Woody Guthrie's songs for children. Further exploration of the BBC's written archives and an extended examination of the evidence of the music played in the 1950s and early 1960s could reveal the corporation's conceptions of other social groups such as the emerging teenagers, working-class men and more about

housewives and young women. Ethnography and the collection of the oral histories of '*Children's Choice* children' would triangulate the study and provide an insight into how individuals engaged with the show, and how it affected their view of childhood.

Like *Children's Choice*, the subject of the next chapter covers similar issues of entertainment and education using nostalgia, the songs of music hall and a dazzling array of musical genres. The aims of Jim Henson seem not dissimilar to those of John Reith, yet the change of decade and the strong American influence has a profound effect on the song selection and hence the construction of childhood created by *The Muppet Show*

Chapter Five

C is for cookie, Mahna, Mahna: Conflicting discourses of childhood education in the songs of *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*

Lydia, oh Lydia, that encyclopedia.
 Lydia, the queen of tattoo ...
 She can give you the view of the world in tattoo,
 If you step up and tell her where
 For a dime you can see Kankakee or Paris
 Or Washington crossing the Delaware ...
 You can learn a lot from Lydia
 (Kermit the Frog, *The Muppet Show*, episode 102⁷³)

The Muppet Show and *Sesame Street* have entertained viewers for over four decades. Their enduring success and global reach have undoubtedly influenced opinions about the enrichment of children through tele-visual culture. Yet the two shows frame very different discourses of childhood and of children's education. Music forms a substantial part of the content of both programmes and analysis of the songs on the two shows highlights these dissimilar constructions. I argue that the educational impulse of *The Muppet Show* is progressive and is derived from the prominent use of a particular genre of music that reflects the show's part British identity.

The Muppets have spawned a wealth of biographical and critical literature. Henson's life and career are covered in biographies by Holub (2010), Jones (2013) and others whilst fan-produced websites (MuppetWiki, 2016) provide comprehensive factual detail on his other creations including *Fraggle Rock*, *Sesame Street*, *The Dark Crystal* (Henson and Oz, 1982) and *Labyrinth* (Henson, 1986). Martin (in Dobrin, 2004) highlights the 'ecological literacy' of Henson's productions whilst the chapters of *Kermit Culture* (Garlen and Graham, 2009) discuss *The*

⁷³ The first number of the reference for episodes denotes the series; the second two numbers the episode within that series. The referencing system is adopted from the comprehensive *MuppetWiki* website (2016).

Muppet Show's relationships with sex, violence, money, feminism, identity, subjectivity and gender. Yet there is virtually no analysis of the music of *Sesame Street* or *The Muppet Show* or discussions about how the songs might communicate Henson's philosophies of childhood.

Drawing on CMQ analysis I discuss how musical differences inform varying discourses of childhood, and also how often-conflicting ideologies can compete within the same show and even within the same text. Whilst *Sesame Street*'s depiction of an urban community was largely publicly funded, with its curriculum-informed content aimed at pre-school children, *The Muppet Show* was commercially driven, set in an anarchic music hall, and aimed at an intergenerational family audience. Music hall as an aesthetic and musical form is central to *The Muppet Show*. Its fast-paced, variety show format, featuring comedians, singers, dancers and novelty acts mirrors a typical playbill from the 1800s. The anarchic, violent and sexualised mix of high and low cultural references set in a dilapidated theatre, with an audience who veer between indifference and confrontation, reveals not only Henson's attention to historical detail, but his willingness to serve up challenging and diverse material for his young audience.

I begin with a brief overview of *The Muppet Show* emphasising both its transnational identity and the unique content that British audiences received. I follow this by examining the vast array of music featured in the five series of the show. I highlight how the sheer eclecticism contributes to a critique of the construction of childhood as a separate entity, whilst the dominance of the songs of music hall and of musicals in general further blurs the boundaries between well defined discourses of childhood and hence adulthood.

The links between music hall and *The Muppet Show* are discussed with reference to 'the music hall formula' in which child-friendly music, with high CMQ scores, is used as a vehicle for the dissemination of adult themes, usually disguised by a range of literary device, most notably double entendre. By including such potentially-contentious material, Henson confronts the child recipient with adult morality. This, I argue, both invests the child with agency to create meaning whilst challenging the

Romantic discourse of childhood based on innocence, vulnerability and separation. It also disavows adults of their status as protectors and definers of childhood, contributing to an age-inclusive culture of ‘family’ entertainment. I suggest that the continued popularity of music hall as a genre for children provides a site of anti-hegemonic resistance and throws into question the categorisation of children’s music by the age of the intended audience.

Finally, I compare the songs of *The Muppet Show* with those of *Sesame Street* and discuss the binary difference in the educational philosophies of the two shows. Even though the two shows share a key character (Kermit the Frog), the music of *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street* reveals opposing discourses of childhood. The songs of *The Muppet Show* offer a progressive educational philosophy that frames children as part of intergenerational groups, an educational strategy developed by the educational psychologists and practitioners such as Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori and Rudolph Steiner. Conversely, the songs of *Sesame Street* are explicitly educational in a didactic and pedagogical sense, issues explored through CMQ analysis.

5.1 The didactic songs of *Sesame Street*

Combining education with entertainment in a way that satisfies all stake holders is a seemingly-impossible task. Non-educational ‘low-quality’ children’s programming attracts larger audiences than its high-quality educational equivalent (Jordan, 1996, in Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 111), whilst producers are wary of ‘the spinach syndrome’ whereby children actively avoid programming that is designed to be ‘good for them’ (Jordan, 2004, in *ibid.*). Although Henson was vague about his own educational philosophy,⁷⁴ in *Sesame Street* he sought to address the issue of balancing explicitly educational content with entertainment (‘edu-tainment’).

⁷⁴ Henson spoke of how TV and film could be ‘an influence for good’ and could ‘help to shape the thoughts of children and adults in a positive way’ (Underwood, 2009, p. 12).

Interestingly, Henson ceased his involvement with advertisements during his *Sesame Street* years in an attempt to insulate both himself and his characters from the influence of commercialism (Underwood, 2009, p. 11). The puppets of *Sesame Street* rarely mentioned money and were unencumbered by jobs, and financial commitments (Leal, 2009, p. 204).⁷⁵

Most children's programming (including *The Muppet Show*) derives its income from advertising and international distribution. However, 'the marketplace economy does not always work in the best interests of the developing child' (Stasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 100). U.S. Campaigns through the 1970s by Action for Children's TV (ATV) led to vague but well-meaning rulings by the Federal Communication Commission for children's programmers to include educational content. Further legislation defined education in terms of reading, writing, academic, cognitive and intellectual skills, differentiating these from the less-identifiable 'pro-social' content which encouraged children to feel good about themselves (Stasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 103). Following two years of research and eight million dollars of funding from both government and private sources, *Sesame Street* had a specific remit for educating the twelve million children of pre-school age⁷⁶ (especially those from Hispanic families in urban centres; Ball and Bogatz, 1970, p. 1 and p. 13) and a mission to make young children 'ready to learn' (Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 103). Opening on 10 November 1969 on National Educational Television (later replaced by Public Broadcasting Service or PBS; Maudlin, 2009, p. 171), *Sesame Street* aimed to teach children 'how to think, not *what* to think' (Joan G. Cooney, *Sesame Street* co-creator, producer and president of the *Children's Television Workshop* - CTW; Dobrin, 2004, p. 237).

Cooney and her team tried to build on what they felt children already enjoyed: 'cartoons, game shows ... slapstick humour, music with a beat ... fast-paced, oft-repeated commercials' (Fisch and Truglio, 2014, p. xi). These 'attention holding'

⁷⁵ Even though Henson attempted to work with a degree of integrity and responsibility to 'the children of the country', he actively negotiated for his Muppets to feature in *Sesame Street* and received the majority of the money derived from merchandising spinoffs (Leal, 2009, p. 206).

⁷⁶ In the late 1960s, 80% of American three to four year olds did not attend school of any kind (Ball and Bogatz, 1970, p. 1)

techniques (which included ‘variety’) were later used in *The Muppet Show* (Ball and Bogatz, 1970, p. 3). Children’s television produces both academic and pro-social benefits (Calvert *et al*, 2002, in Calvert and Kotler, 2003, p. 277), and studies have shown that the fast-paced ‘expository format of discrete vignettes’ seen in *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show* are common formats for educational material (Calvert *et al*, 2002, in Calvert and Kotler, 2003, p. 280). *Sesame Street* was informed by professionals in child development, education and children’s literature who forged content designed to develop skills in problem solving, language, reading, symbolic representation (numbers, shapes), cognitive processes (ordering, reasoning, perception, motivation), knowledge of the physical world (knowledge of towns, countryside), and the social environment, as well as affective skills (Ball and Bogatz, 1970, p. 5; Dobrin, 2004, p. 238). These goals led to the commissioning and inclusion of songs such as ‘C is for cookie’, ‘ABC-DEF-GHI’, and ‘Counting is wonderful’ (in fact, anything sung by The Count).

When Stevie Wonder visited the street in 1973, he performed his composition ‘1 2 3 Sesame Street’. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of *Sesame Street*’s songs are highly typical of children’s music. Music is included in over 70% of the segments of *Sesame Street* (Wolfe and Stambaugh, 1993). The show’s research team found that when children watched with parents and other adults, learning was increased, a result confirmed in subsequent studies (Reiser, Tessmer and Phelps, 1984). As a result, the show’s producers deliberately included material aimed at adults (Palmer and Fisch, in Fisch and Truglio, 2014, p. 7), adult celebrities, and parodies of ‘adult’ songs and culture. As discussed above, such intergenerational references were more frequent in *The Muppet Show*. Interestingly, as the ‘adult’ sections have been greatly reduced from *Sesame Street* over the years research shows that young children increasingly watch the show on their own (Fisch and Truglio, 2014, p. 104). Conversely, the Muppets’ latest TV show (2015) is, according to Disney ‘a prime time ... contemporary, documentary-style show ... a more adult Muppet show, for kids of all ages’ (*The Muppets*, 2015). Research into even the most seemingly-innocuous children’s shows such as *Barney and Friends* has revealed the positive benefits on children’s imaginative responses of being accompanied by an adult viewer

(Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 106). However, one study shows that the positive effects of the intergenerational viewing of *Sesame Street* were only detected in lower social groups and not in middle-class families (Salomon, 1977, p. 1146). Despite *Sesame Street*'s curriculum-based remit,⁷⁷ the show rarely mentions school or education explicitly (Maudlin, 2009, p. 171) yet it was able to cover topics such as numeracy, literacy, and social skills in a fun, and engaging way, such as guest star Richard Prior extemporising on the alphabet in 1976. In an average hour-long episode, five of the musical sections are explicitly aimed at teaching academic skills whilst three sections aim to encourage pro-social skills (Wolfe and Stambaugh, 1993). The songs on *Sesame Street* were mostly composed by professional contemporary songwriters such as Joe Raposo, Jeff Moss, Kenneth Ascher and Paul Williams. My analysis reveals that, like the show's intended demographic, the songs of *Sesame Street* are more child-friendly (simple, repetitive, rhyme-based, and other CMQ attributes of childness) and more obviously didactic than those of *The Muppet Show*.

Raposo's 'C is for Cookie' perhaps best exemplifies the simplicity and inherent innocence of many of the songs on *Sesame Street*. It scores an impressive eleven out of twelve (92%) on the CMQ for Music with its short, scale-wise intervals, major chord I, IV, V progression, perfect cadences, highly repetitive nature and brevity. Lyrically, the metric repetition, high levels of rhyme and comedic tone score 82%. The song's instrumental arrangement features child-friendly high pitched tones, such as a glockenspiel, brass, a range of background singers. Overall, the song scores a high 83%.

Moss's 'Who are the people in your neighbourhood?' follows a similar format, with repetition, rhyme and major key tonic-dominant tonality being the most obvious musical signifiers of childhood. In true music hall style, the wordy and descriptive verses of 'Neighbourhood' (the original version mentions teachers, school, and 'numbers and the alphabet') give way to highly-repetitive 'sing along' choruses. The majority of *Sesame Street*'s songs have high tempi of between 121 and 180 bpm,

⁷⁷ A 1970 review suggested that *Sesame Street* had 'excellent educational impact' (Ball and Bogatz, 1970, p. 371).

and short melodic ranges with intervals of between a fourth and a tenth (Wolfe and Stambaugh, 1993). Unusually for children's music as a whole, they are mostly sung by the male presenters. Henson's *Sesame Street* puppeteers were almost exclusively male, as they were on *The Muppet Show*. The typical children's song has a female vocalist delivering highly-enunciated melodies in a high pitch. As discussed in chapter two, the use of sing-song baby language has been shown to have positive benefits on young children (Bhat, 1967, Fernald, 1985; Hayes and Ahrens, 1988). However, a number of *Sesame Street* songs are less than obviously child-friendly. For example, Raposo's 'Bein' green' dates back to 1969 and the earliest days of the show.⁷⁸ It has one of the lowest CMQ scores of the songs analysed in my study. The low tempo, barely-defined rhythm and extended musical theatre-influenced form score a low 50% for Music. The lyrics register just four out of the eleven CMQ attributes (36%). Apart from the assonant qualities of the opening line ('it's not easy being green') there is very little in the way of rhyme. Other children's music signifiers such as metric repetition, short, discreet phrases and comedy themes are largely absent. The lyrics are existential and self-reflective:

When green is all there is to be,
It could make you wonder why,
But, why wonder, why wonder?
I'm green and it'll do fine,
It's beautiful and I think it's what I want to be

Rejection, isolation, and self-acceptance of bodily attributes are not unheard of themes in modern children's music (c.f. 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer', 'Puff the Magic Dragon', 'Jake the Peg', or 'The ugly duckling'). Through music, *Sesame Street* was able to articulate the concerns of its target demographic of low income Hispanic and Afro-American families, often disenfranchised from traditional pre-school education (Fisch and Truglio, in Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 103). The relatively complex chordal progression (a downwards chromatic opening shift, followed by a minor dominant chord, and a melancholic tone-down key

⁷⁸ *Sesame Street*'s 'Bein' Green' was revived in *The Muppet Show* episode 112.

change later in the song), low-key acoustic guitar and single vocal arrangement, places 'Bein' green' on the adult end of the CMQ spectrum of childness.

Kenneth Ascher and Paul Williams' 'Rainbow Connection' from *The Muppet Movie* (Frawley, 1979) shares similar traits, and is analysed above. As young viewers of Henson's creations have grown into adulthood, it is often such texts that are remembered, I would argue, for their atypicality (Levetin, 2012, p. 233). The revival of the song on twenty-first century Muppet films plays on adult nostalgia, an overriding impulse which (increasingly) shapes children's culture and its reception. Joe Raposo's other significant musical contribution was the *Sesame Street* theme tune.⁷⁹ In contrast to 'Bein' green', the theme song centres on optimism ('sunny day sweeping the clouds away'), healthy living ('the air is sweet'), inclusion ('come and play ... friendly neighbours there') and community ('that's where we meet'). The theme tune's up-tempo, major key, I-IV-V music, use of perfect rhyme, digestible phrases, use of child singers and high-toned instrumental backing renders the song extremely child-friendly. The use of 'blue' notes from the minor pentatonic scale root this song in vernacular popular music, in contrast to the complex musical theatre trappings of *Sesame Street*'s biggest chart hit, Jeff Moss's (and Ernie's) 'Rubber Duckie'. A more self-confident song of resistance than Raposo's 'Bein' green' is Jeff Moss's 'I love trash' sung by Oscar the Grouch, *Sesame Street*'s most materially-impooverished resident. Its proudly anti-consumerist message has been repeated in recorded versions by pop-cultural outsiders k.d. lang and Steven Tyler. However, its lyrics and music are incongruous. The song's delicate waltz time signature, extravagant melodic intervals, and nineteen semi-tone melodic range somewhat belie its trash-cultural message. The musical theatre-inspired instrumental arrangement features high pitched tones of brass and glockenspiel often found in many of the early songs of *Sesame Street*. The low number of musical signifiers of childness indicates a text with intergenerational appeal. This combination is not, however, without its critics. In an early *Sesame Street* episode, Bert sings the slow and wistful 'Here in the middle of imagination' to Ernie who has had a bad dream and seen monsters ('Go away, bad things'). The show's

⁷⁹ *Sesame Street* producer Jon Stone also contributed lyrics for the show's theme tune.

researchers feared that children would be scared rather than reassured by the song and the visual representation of monsters. Their findings showed how children were highly attentive to the scary parts, but much less so to the slow soporific song (Palmer and Fisch, 2014, p. 11). The sketch was eventually edited to make it less frightening.

Despite the efforts of *Sesame Street*'s creators to educate and entertain the show came in for criticism. Advertisers argued that it was not as popular as other entertainment shows, whilst education academics decried the 'phony pedagogy, vulgar side shows, bad acting, and layers of smoke and fog to clog the eager minds of small children' (Morrow, 2006). McDonogh, Gregg and Wong (2001, p. 135) highlight a number of criticisms of the show; some claim that *Sesame Street*'s mix of fun and education undermines school teaching, whilst its vignette variety format cultivates short attention spans in children. Others suggest that *Sesame Street*, like many other children's TV shows, simply acts as an extended advert for spin-off products, and breeds a consumerist mind set in young children. The show was even branded racist by Hispanic activists who found the bilingual sections 'patronising'. Song writer Joe Raposo responded to criticisms whilst commenting on music's role in the changing cultural construction of childhood. He states:

Some educators have complained that the music on Sesame Street is too sophisticated for little ears, that we should curb the spontaneity of blues and rock and instead teach the children "Mary Had a Little Lamb." But what most educators don't realize is that the lamb left the nursery the day they brought the TV set in.

(Joe Raposo in *Beatles and Beethoven, Move on over: The seventies sound is Sesame Street*, 1971).

5.2 'It's time to meet The Muppets'

Henson had been performing with puppets on TV since 1955, fronting numerous high profile advertising campaigns (Kennedy, 2009, pp. 142-44) and delivering humorous political satire on mainstream on adult shows such as *The Jimmy Dean Show*, and *Ed Sullivan*. *The Muppet Show* signalled Henson's desire to return to a

wider age demographic after working on the pre-school-oriented *Sesame Street* since 1969. Fearing being typecast (Dobrin, 2004, p. 236; Kennedy, 2009, p. 144), he felt the need to remind his audience that 'the Muppets have an edge' (Leal, 2009, p. 204) and decided to free himself from 'the didactic realm' of children's television (Maudlin, 2009, p. 174). Unlike *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show* was not governed by educational research, curriculum and accountability. The Children's Television Act (1990) was developed over twenty years of campaigning by Cooney, the ACT, the CTW and other concerned parties. It forced broadcasters to include at least three hours per week of explicitly educational programming. The act defined these shows as 'having education as a significant purpose', 'specifically address[ing] the needs of a child audience ... defined as sixteen and under' and 'labelled as educational on the air and in printed listings, etc.' (in Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009, p. 101). Reruns and new episodes of *Sesame Street* meet these requirements; *The Muppet Show* (and the more-recent *The Muppets* TV show) does not.

The first episode aired in January 1976 in a prime time, family-friendly slot from 5.45 pm to 6.15 pm on the U.K.'s second most popular station, ITV. Interestingly, the show was not aired in the U.S.A. until four months later. After American TV networks had rejected Henson's two pilot episodes (the first is titled 'Sex and Violence'), he was approached by Ukrainian-born British media mogul Lew Grade. Grade's Associated Television company (ATV) financed, produced and distributed the show, licensing the results back to the States and the rest of the world. This business model had proved successful for Grade who had previously worked with Gerry Anderson and his sci-fi puppet adventure shows, most famously, *Thunderbirds*. *The Muppet Show's* part-British identity is essential to a deeper understanding of the show as music hall (see Dennison, 2009). Filming and production of the show took place entirely in the U.K. With a history of anarchic, confrontational, nonsensical humourists such as The Goons and Monty Python, British audiences were perhaps better primed than their American equivalents to embrace the Muppet's surreal and often confrontational aesthetic (Garlen and Graham, 2009, p. 3). British versions of the show were around two to three minutes

longer than their American counterparts due to different advertising requirements. The extra U.K.-only musical segments help reveal the extent of the relationship between the Muppets and British music hall. A human guest star gave each episode of *The Muppet Show* some sort of continuity; however, in true music hall fashion, the shows lack a coherent narrative. Individual guests such as Johnny Cash or Vincent Price might lend an episode a musical or aesthetic theme, but any sense of authorial narrative or plot resolution is subsumed in seemingly-random and anarchic violence, abusive heckling, nonsensical visual gags and baffling word play. The 'chaos, lunacy... absolute madness' and high levels of violence in the musical sketches has been noted (Maudlin, 2009, p. 174). This violence ranges from slapstick (Wayne and Wanda's many onstage accidents, Fozzie's frequent pratfalls, The Great Gonzo's stunts), anarchic destruction (by Animal, Crazy Harry, the Swedish Chef, Sweetums), anti-authoritarian outbursts (the cast's constant undermining of Kermit, Sam the Eagle, and the adult guest stars), to sexual predation and references to domestic violence (Kennedy, 2009). The songs also allude to feminism, multi-culturalism, racial equality, environmental issues (Martin, 2004), issues of class, and anti-capitalism. As I assert more fully below, Henson's subversion of the well-worn tropes of children's culture empower children and promote a philosophy of progressive educationalism. Henson satirises the infantilising formats of Disney films destabilising their childlike certainty, closed narratives and easily-identifiable binaries (good/evil, male/female; Zipes, 1995, pp. 112-117).

The Muppet Show draws heavily on the original songs of British music hall. Jim Henson's inclusion of such satirical and coded material allows him to critique and subvert discourses of childhood innocence and protection. Ultimately, the gesture empowers children and celebrates their ability to interpret multi-layered texts that use performance, and literary devices to disguise the world of adults.

5.3 The music of *The Muppet Show*

After the introductory theme tune, the first song on the first episode of *The Muppet Show* is 'Mahna Mahna', a kitsch piece of semi-instrumental lounge jazz from the 1968 Italian documentary *Sweden: Heaven and Hell* (Scattini, 1968).⁸⁰

This is followed by Rimsky-Korsakov's 1900 orchestral composition 'Flight of the bumble bee', a Scott Joplin tango-ragtime piano tune from 1909, and a 1959 ballad, 'You and I and George', in which George drowns. The show concludes with a version of Randy Newman's 1967 music hall pastiche 'Simon Smith and his Amazing Dancing Bear', and an a cappella version of 'Temptation' from the 1933 film 'Going Hollywood', sample lyrics 'I'm just a slave for you'. These six songs exemplify the highly eclectic nature of the music selected for *The Muppet Show* and are a microcosm of the songs featured across the show's four-and-a-half year, five series run. I highlight five main points of interest that define Henson's attitude to the music on *The Muppet Show*. These points underpin a discussion about how the show frames its child audience musically, by placing them in a wider society comprised of adults, adult ideas and adult issues. The implications of this choice are discussed in relation to the issue of progressive education. Firstly, the sheer volume of music featured on *The Muppet Show* is staggering. There are over 650 songs included in the 120 half-hour episodes. Secondly, very few of the songs were written specifically for the show. The songs of *Sesame Street*, Henson's other TV shows and his films (including *The Muppets*' films) were, on the whole, written by commissioned songwriters and composers specifically for those shows. However, the vast majority of the songs on *The Muppet Show* already had a commercially release with many being well known to U.K. and American audiences.

Thirdly, it seems that very few of the songs were created with children as their intended primary audience. Both the tone and content of *The Muppet Show* changed during its five series; my analysis of the music reveals how *The Muppet Show* became more child focussed over its run. In the U.K., the BBC had a long

⁸⁰ The film focusses on 'nine different aspects of sexuality such as lesbian nightclubs, porn films, swinging lifestyles of married couples and sex education of teenagers. The film also examines drug addiction, alcoholism and suicides in Sweden'.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden:_Heaven_and_Hell

history of broadcasting to children on radio and later TV (see the previous chapter). Like *The Muppet Show*, radio shows such as *Children's Favourites*, *For the Children*, and *Children's Hour* featured a disparate array of genres from a range of age-intended backgrounds. A rhythm and blues song such as Louis Jordan's 'Barnyard boogie' (included in the final series of *The Muppet Show* in episode 504) has all the hallmarks of a children's song (animal theme, rural setting, and representational sound effects) and scores high on the CMQ (75% for Music, 73% for Lyrics). 'Rockin Robin' (also rhythm and blues) recorded by Bobby Day in 1958 (episode 510) has become a children's favourite despite its original context as a text for an intergenerational audience. An animal theme coupled to a host of children's musical signifiers (92% CMQ score for Music, 73% for Lyrics) and exposure on both *The Muppet Show* and the BBC's *Children's Favourites* has downshifted the age of audience with which the song is most associated. A version by child-star vocalist Michael Jackson further contributed. Rhythm and blues shares many characteristics with music hall; sexual references are common, but coded through double entendre. Unlike rhythm and blues which was generally age-inclusive, rock'n'roll was largely teen centred with most of the sexual references and lascivious vocal stylings of its antecedent expunged. 'Alley oop' by the Hollywood Argyles (ep. 516) is another good example. In this case, associations with a popular comic strip and a dinosaur theme have helped ensure regular inclusion on children's radio and TV, thus cementing its status as a children's record. Only four of the songs from series one seem to have been created for an implied audience of children. These include the songs derived from the poems of A.A. Milne ('Cottleston pie', ep. 107 and 'Halfway down the stairs', ep. 110), the Disney musical *Peter Pan* ('Never smile at a crocodile', ep. 114) and the Hollywood musical *Hans Christian Andersen* ('Inchworm', ep. 109). The other 112 songs originate from a wide range of age-inclusive, or even adult-intended sources, as detailed in point five below.

Henson's original intention to create a more grown-up show based on his pre-*Sesame Street* work seems to have been tempered during *The Muppet Show's* run through the increasing inclusion of child-focussed content. Kennedy (2009, p. 142) notes how the sexualised and anarchic violence diminished across the five series.

Violence in early episodes (especially those in series one and two) was often focused on the female human stars (Ruth Buzzi, Sandy Duncan, Rita Moreno) and was sexualised (Kennedy, 2009, pp. 144-147). By series three, the violence became more formalised, theatrical and cartoon-like, offering fewer opportunities for resistant feminist readings. The violence increasingly took place between Muppets (Kennedy, 2009, p. 147) placing the show in a familiar lineage of adversarial animated characters such as Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny, and Wile E. Coyote and The Road Runner. CMQ analysis reveals how these changes are reflected in the musical choices. Interestingly, series five contains many more songs that seemed to have been produced specifically for children, as well as many that have derived from a canon of children's music formed by regular inclusion on the playlists of child-centred media, such as the BBC's *Children's Favourites* in the 1950s and 1960s. These include the traditional French nursery rhyme 'Frère Jacques' (ep. 501), an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's 1871 poem 'Jabberwocky' (ep. 506) and songs from family films *The Wizard of Oz* ('We're off to see the wizard', ep. 506), and *Doctor Doolittle* ('Talk to the animals', ep. 524). The presence of *Children's Favourites* regulars such as 'Teddy bears picnic' (ep. 508), 'How much is that doggie in the window?' (ep. 512), 'The laughing policeman' (ep. 518), 'The Gnu' (ep. 519), 'Does you chewing gum lose its flavour on the bedpost overnight?' (ep. 109), and 'Ying Tong song' (ep. 520) suggests the influence of Lew Grade and the English production location. Notwithstanding the phenomenological issues involved in implied readership, it appears that the greater use of songs from established canons of children's music renders the later series of *The Muppet Show* more deliberately child-focussed than the first, and concurs with Kennedy's analysis of the diminishing levels of sex and violence.

Despite being written specifically for *The Muppet Movie* in 1979, revised in episode 509 of *The Muppet Show* with Debbie Harry, and again in *The Muppets* movie of 2011, 'Rainbow connection' is atypical of most children's music. The Music scores a modest 58%. Large melodic intervals, a challenging intervallic melody and a wide top-line vocal melodic range decrease both its singability and memorability. Sonically, the song scores just 33%. There is little in the way of instrumentation or

production to indicate that the song is age differentiated. The lyrics are highly reflective and suggest a nostalgic adult impulse. Existential themes of hope, loss, and optimism in the face of disappointment, delivered largely in the first person plural ('we know that it's probably magic') using a range of metaphors (rainbows, mermaids, magic) equate to a CMQ score of just 18% for Lyrics. Songs with adult origins that have become associated with childhood are subject to discussion in the chapters about folk music (chapter two) and the BBC's children's radio broadcasting (chapter four). Analysis reveals that musical rather than lyrical or sonic factors are more important in the categorisation and canonisation of these songs.

Fourthly, the wide range of release dates of the original compositions shows that Henson was happy to work with material that was decades and sometimes centuries old, rather than the largely contemporaneous nature of the songs on *Sesame Street*, *Fraggle Rock* and his other work (see Figures 4 and 5). The oldest song in series one is Beethoven's 'Minuet in G Major' from 1796 (see Appendix 9). Apart from the aforementioned 'Flight of the bumblebee' from 1900 there are three songs that originate from the nineteenth century including 'Tit Willow' from Gilbert and Sullivan's 1885 Operetta *The Mikado*. Songs from the first two decades of the twentieth century include 'The Entertainer' (1902) by Scott Joplin, and 'Solace' (1909), 'Nobody' (1906) and 'Row row row' from *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1912*. The 1920s and 1930s are well represented by songs such as 'Ain't misbehavin'', 'Side by side', 'Mississippi Mud', 'It's only a paper moon', 'You do something to me' and 'I get a kick out of you'. The mean average year of release of the songs featured in series one (see Appendix 9) is 1946.⁸¹ The songs from series five (see Appendix 10) have an average release date of 1939. This wide range of dates combines with my fifth and final point. The music of *The Muppet Show* features a dazzling array of musical genres. Genre analysis shows that series one (see Figure 6, p. 145) was dominated by songs from musicals (mostly Hollywood musicals of the 1920s and 1930s) which account for 30% of the total. The broadly defined genre of 'pop' (the popular and commercial music of the day) constitute 16%. Jazz and ragtime, mostly

⁸¹ Traditional songs and songs with no traceable date of origin were not included. Songs written for the show are deemed to be contemporary with the date of broadcast of the episode unless there is information otherwise.

from the first two or three decades of the twentieth century contribute 9% of the total.

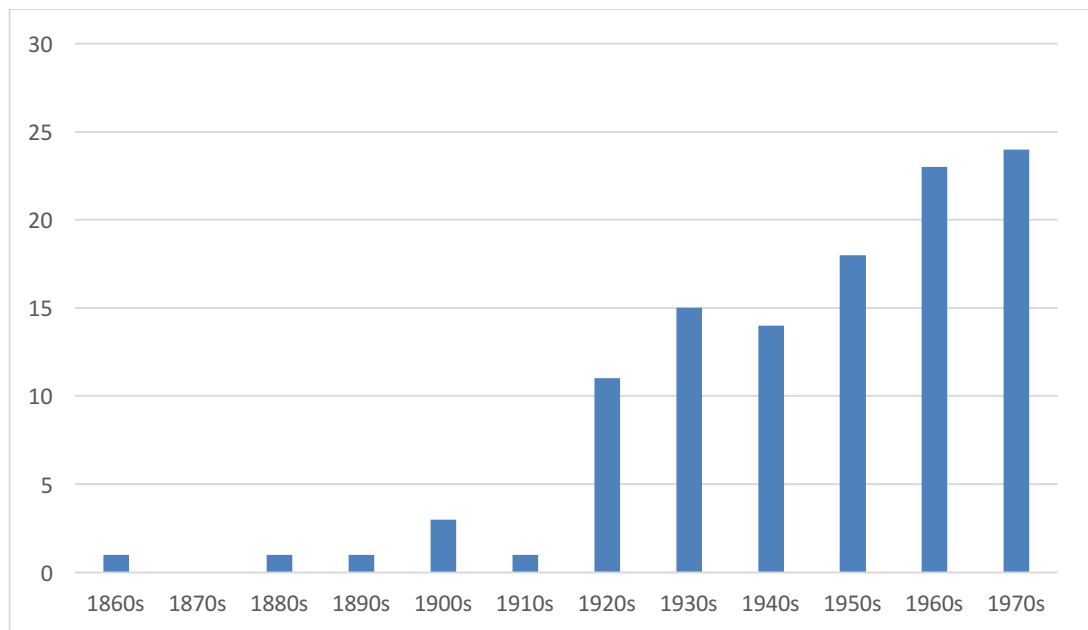


Figure 4

Year of release/publishing by decade of songs on The Muppet Show series one broadcast in 1976.

Novelty songs make up 8% with country and the aforementioned classical making up 5% each. Other genres such as rock'n'roll (3%), ballad (3%) and World (3%, broadly defined as songs with an identifiable non-UK or US national identity, such as Spanish, Italian, or Mexican) give breadth to Henson's inclusive ideology. Interestingly, 'children's music' is in the extreme minority with only three songs being identified, as described above.

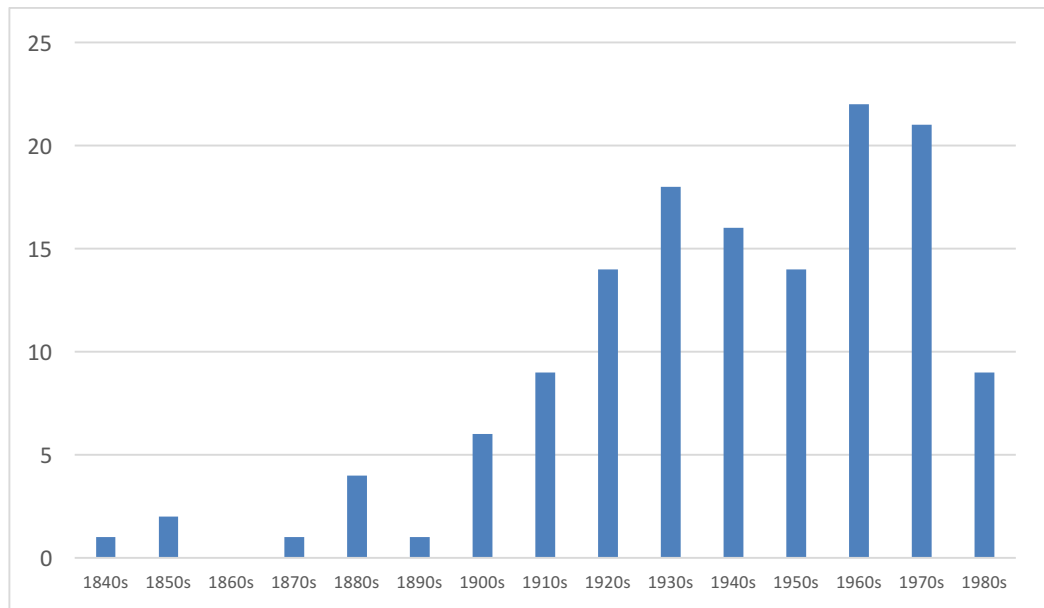


Figure 5

Year of release/publishing by decade of songs on The Muppet Show series five broadcast in 1981.

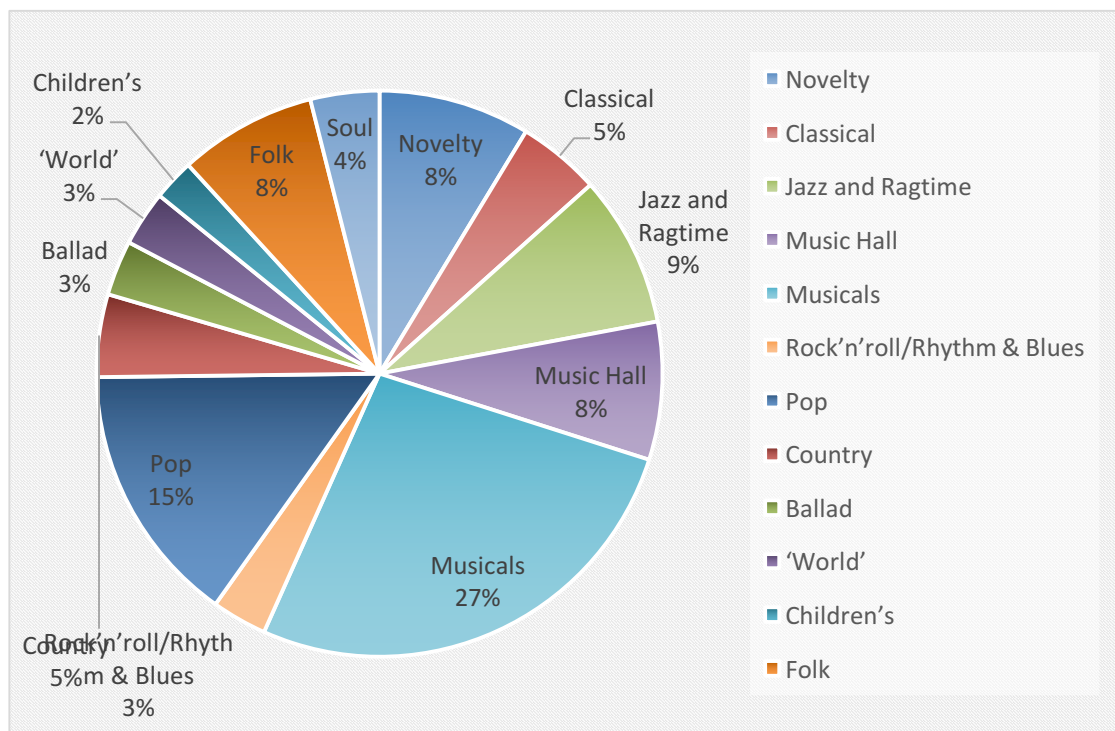


Figure 6

Genre categories of the 116 songs in The Muppet Show series one

In series five (Figure 7, p. 146), classical compositions such as Bach's 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring' (1716), Boccherini's 'Minuet in A Major' (1771) and Liszt's 'Liebestraume' (1850) provide high cultural content, accounting for 6% of the 146

songs in the series. Folk songs such as ‘Goodnight Irene’ (1908), ‘Will the circle be unbroken’ (1907) and ‘Danny Boy’ (1913) account for 7% of the total. Although the genre identity of individual episodes was sometimes informed by the guest star (Johnny Cash performed predominantly country music in episode 521, Gladys Knight mostly soul in episode 516), most individual shows combined high and low brow musical numbers. Vernacular styles rubbed shoulders with classical references. As discussed in the introductory chapter, categorising music by genre is inherently problematic. The identification of core tropes and consistent nomenclature is a fluid and subjective process.

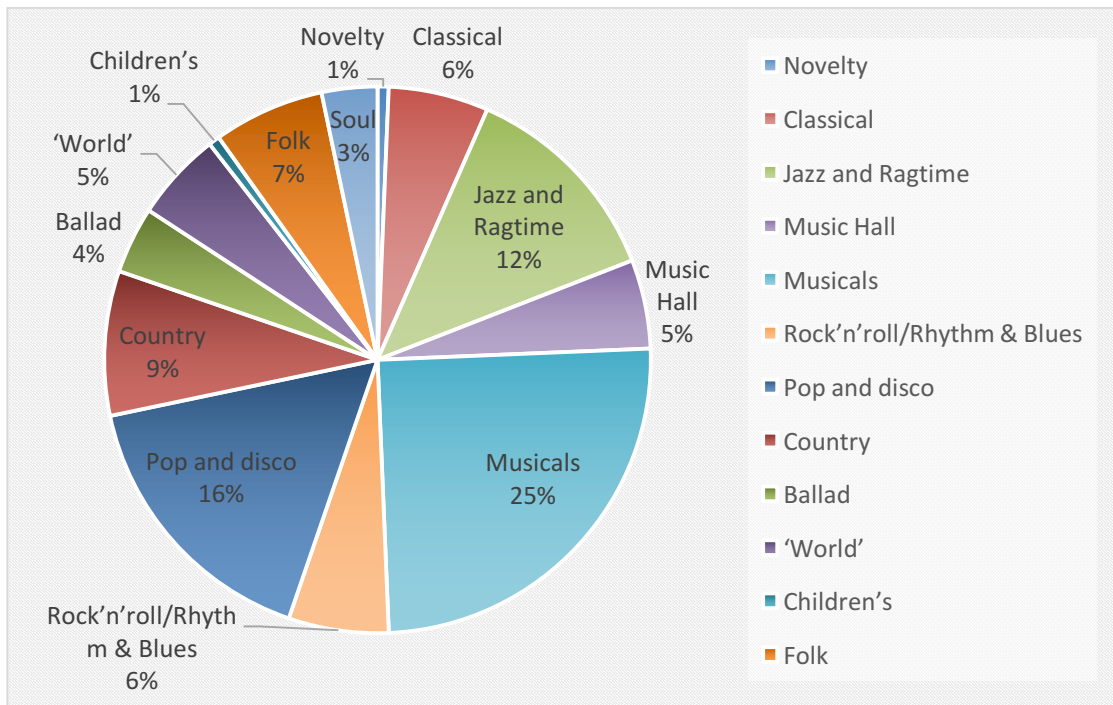


Figure 7

Genre categories of the 146 songs in The Muppet Show series five

Defining logics such as form (waltz, blues, children's music), content (novelty, political, satirical), the gender of the vocalist, the decade of release (Sixties music or Seventies music), the country of origin (French music, Jamaican music, or even the contentious World Music), affect, or accompanying activity (music for driving, music for exercise) intersect in hybrid or sub-genres and in the liminal spaces between traditional genre definitions.

Henson's decision to include nearly all 'adult' songs in *The Muppet Show* contrasts with *Sesame Street* where songs such as Joe Raposo's 'C is for cookie' were commissioned to appeal to a mostly pre-school demographic. The musical genre changes between series one and five tend to support Kennedy's observations that *The Muppet Show* became less anarchic and more formulaic in later episodes. The most notable change is the decrease in novelty songs from 8% in series one to less than 1% in series five. This corresponds with a similar decrease in songs from music hall (down from 8% to 5%). The decrease in novelty and music hall combined (down from 16% to 6%) equates to less air time for such diverse series one exotica such as 'Does your chewing gum lose its flavour on the bedpost overnight?', 'Lydia the tattooed lady' or 'Pachalafaka'. More conventional music from contemporary sources was included as *The Muppet Show* developed.

Whereas series one contained no folk or soul music, these genres accounted for 10% of series five. The 3% of rock'n'roll songs in series one doubled to 6% for combined rock'n'roll/rhythm and blues in series five. It seems that as outside pressures led to a less anarchic, less violently-sexualised aesthetic across the five series, so Henson moved from strange, exotic and sexually-coded songs, requiring an adult sensibility to fully decode, to the tamer, more formalised songs of his childhood⁸² (and potentially, his children's childhoods in the '60s and '70s). The show's final series featured popular genres of the late '70s/ early '80s such as disco and new wave. The significant increase in music of black origin across the five series better represents the racial origins of audiences from the 100 or so countries to which the show was licenced and broadcast. What is now known as World music also increased (from 3%-5%). Additionally, the shift in genres corresponds with the music commercially popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Country (up from 5% to 9%) and soul (up from 0% to 3%) both increased while upbeat contemporary chart songs such as The Village People's 'In the navy' and Blondie's 'One way or another' made appearances.

⁸² Henson was an inter-war baby born in 1936. Commercial genres popular in his adolescence (folk, rock'n'roll, soul) largely replaced forms such as ragtime, jazz, operetta and music hall.

5.4 *The Muppet Show* as music hall

The eclecticism of the music on *The Muppet Show* mirrors the songs and styles of the original Halls. Brass bands, classical musicians, minstrel acts, and the songs of opera, comic songs, ballads, folk music, and 'supper-room songs' (Russell, 1997, p. 106). As in *The Muppet Show*, music formed only a part of the entertainment in the Halls. Circus and animal acts, ventriloquism, recitations, burlesque performances, comedians and display of 'innovations' (pyrotechnics, lighting and other special effects) all had their place on bills that contained up to forty items (Russell, 1997, p. 112). The songs that have remained most associated with music hall are the comic songs dating from the 1860s until the end of the century. *The Muppet Show* can be categorised into one or more of three televisual genres, namely 'a backstage drama, a variety show, [and] a docu-drama about mental institution' (Finch in Garlen and Graham, 2009, p. 15). The high priority placed on music and the frequent use of violent slapstick humour places *The Muppet Show* into the established genre of variety. Both U.S. vaudeville and U.K. music hall are exemplars of this genre. The theatre setting of the show, and the presence of a live audience (of Muppets) are obvious signifiers. The conspiratorial rhetoric that the onstage Muppet performers share with their two audiences (the other Muppets in the theatre and the TV audience through the camera) echo the knowing asides and utterances by original music hall performers. *The Muppet Show* is 'a vaudeville program inflected by late 1970s progressive politics' (Kennedy, 2009, p. 152) and shares a number of characteristics with music hall culture. Firstly, each episode lacks a coherent narrative. Although there are themes that run across the series (Fozzie's ineptitude as a comic, Statler and Waldorf's belligerent heckling, Miss Piggy's flirtations with Kermit and selected male guest stars) and some running jokes within each episode, traditional narrative arcs and their resolution in sit-coms or backstage dramas are absent. The quick-fire miscellany of the onstage acts, coupled with seemingly-random visual and verbal gags mean that any sense of cohesion does not reside in the individual performances or episodes. Didactic messages and over-riding themes are implied rather than explicit.

Underwood suggests that the main theme of *The Muppet Show* is ‘identity and dreams’ (2009, p. 10) although he highlights Henson’s vagueness in articulating this message. Secondly, as mentioned previously, *The Muppet Show* uses coded violence (Kennedy, 2009), nonsense, and the rhetorical mode (the breaking of the fourth wall) to provide a site of resistance to authority. The extensive use of original music hall songs challenges a range of hegemonic narratives. Many music hall songs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries satirise figures of authority such as policemen, politicians and the upper classes, alongside institutes of strict morality such as The Salvation Army and the Church. By serving up age-inclusive music and inviting competent audience members to enjoy the more-adult lyrical and visual references, *The Muppet Show* positions viewers as co-conspirators against authority and specificity. This applies to children’s culture as much as it does to the male sexual predators in the Ruth Buzzi episode (104), the promotion of high-culture and family values of Sam the Bald Eagle or even Kermit’s authority over the other Muppets. In the context of children’s music and *The Muppet Show*, music hall challenges not only discourses Romantic discourses of childhood innocence and separation, but critiques a range of identities associated with gender, sexuality, class, race and nationhood.

U.K. versions of the show required extra sections to account for shorter advert breaks than the U.S. and elsewhere. Many original music hall songs were included in these ‘U.K.-spots’ (a list is included in Appendix 10). The lyrics of a number of these place the narrative within the theatre setting. For example, in ‘The boy in the gallery’ (ep. 204), Miss Piggy, dressed as music hall star Marie Lloyd, sings to her ‘lover’ Waldorf in the box. In the self-deprecating ‘She was one of the early birds’, Gonzo is infatuated with a fellow female theatre goer (ep. 302). It has been noted that, despite the show having mainly American puppeteers and an American at the helm, the U.K.-only spots contribute to the *The Muppet Show*’s part-British identity (cf. Denison, 2009). I further suggest that this identity is largely regional. Many of the songs refer to London (‘Maybe it’s because I’m a Londoner’; ep. 519), its streets (‘Wotcher! Knocked ‘em out in the Old Kent Road’; ep. 201), its boroughs (‘Burlington Bertie from Bow’; ep. 201), Cockney culture and the rhyming slang with

which it is associated. That music hall dance songs such as ‘Knees up Mother Brown’ have entered a canon of children’s music is unsurprising. The Muppets’ version (ep. 410) is set around a piano in a crowded pub and is led by Fozzie dressed as a Pearly King. ‘Mother Brown’ is also in the recorded repertoire of popular children’s folk singer Raffi. Its high tempo, singable chorus, simple structure, repetitive metre, and other attributes score a perfect 100% for Music on the CMQ. The song’s often-nonsensical action-centred lyrics (‘Ee-aye, ee-aye, ee-aye-oh ... knees up, knees up, don’t get the breeze up’) are all signifiers of children’s music (73% for Lyrics) yet even Fozzie visibly winces at the line ‘if I catch you bending, I’ll saw your legs right off’. The subversive nature of music hall is apparent in the Muppets’ version of ‘Burlington Bertie from Bow’ (ep. 201) in which an old tramp promenades the well-to-do streets of London dressed as ‘a toff’. Although the Muppets’ character is male, this class-parody (with verses in the minor key, unusual for children’s music) was popularised by early twentieth-century music hall star Ella Shields, a male-impersonator who derived the character of Bertie from drag king Vesta Tilley. Class, gender, poverty, aging and nostalgia are central to ‘My Old Dutch’, popularised by original music hall star Albert Chevalier and sung by Muppets’ character Burlington Bertie (ep. 206). Cockney rhyming slang (in this case, ‘Dutch’ refers to the Duchess of Fife = wife), Victorian back slang and other secret languages, such as Polari, mask the meaning of words allowing competent users to communicate privately in front of non-speakers. Children have often used derivations of back slang such as Pig Latin to communicate in secret. A song on one of folk-blues singer Lead Belly’s children’s album *Negro Songs for Young People*⁸³ (Folkways, 1960) teaches the listener how to use this language. Two songs in *The Muppets’ U.K.*-spots highlight how coded language and sartorial symbolism was used to communicate openly about homosexuality, at a time when, as Oscar Wilde’s trial highlights, such matters were illegal. The evergreen music hall staple ‘Any old iron’ was sung by Kermit, Fozzie (once again dressed a Pearly King) and two other male Muppets in episode 214. The use of rhyming slang (‘iron’ is short for ‘iron hoof’ = poof), coded visual clues (green ties and the dismissal of the wearing of old-fashioned pocket watches)

⁸³ Only ‘Goodnight Irene’ has been excluded from this more recent compilation. Some material on this album originates from a radio program designed to teach children about the state of Louisiana.

identify this song as a gay anthem (Thompson, 2001). This decoding of the sub-text of the song also involves references to the singer wearing his trousers ‘front to back’ and the gender non-specific compliments on the chorus (‘You look neat. Talk about a treat. You look a dapper from your napper to your feet’). The up-tempo sing-along nature of the music registers 100% for childness on the CMQ, considerably less (64%) for the archaic impressionism of the coded Lyrics. On a similar theme, the Muppets include a version of Vesta Victoria’s 1892 ‘hit’ ‘Daddy wouldn’t buy me a bow-wow’ (ep. 306). Into this seemingly-innocuous text about cats, dogs and other pets, Bradshaw (in Thompson, 2001) reads references to bi-curious dykes. Musically, ‘Bow-wow’ scores a healthy 75% on the CMQ, whilst the words (animal theme, strong use of repetition, rhyme-heavy) match ten out the eleven of the Lyrical criteria (91%). Henson’s intention to blur the age categories of his audience through the inclusion of references to violence, sex, sexuality and other adult themes has been noted (Kennedy, 2009).

A number of *The Muppet Show*’s music hall songs are self-referential and reflect on the often-parodic relationship between the high and low cultural references in the show. In ‘I want to sing in opera’ (ep. 309), Miss Piggy, in the character of an ambitious music hall star, sings ‘I’m getting so tired of these comedy songs. I want to sing something divine’. Sam the Eagle (the much ridiculed self-appointed arbiter of good taste and high culture) describes ‘A frog he would a-wooing go’ (ep. 301) as a ‘charming eighteenth-century romantic ballad’ that he considers ‘pure poetry’. He is forced to reconsider when piano-playing singer Rowlf points out the nonsensical nature of the words. Other ‘adult’ songs included as U.K.-spots include the popular drinking song ‘Down at the Old Bull and Bush’ (ep. 321), and Noel Coward’s ‘Mad dogs and Englishmen’ (1931; ep. 216). With its high-tempo barrage of syllables and wordy proclamations of various racial characteristics, ‘Mad dogs’ is atypical of most children’s music. Equally, the anti-German World War Two propaganda song ‘Run Rabbit Run’ (ep. 421) scores only a modest 64% overall on the CMQ. The animal theme, Henson’s proclivity for the Muppets to portray violence, and the repeated broadcast of the song by BBC Radio on *Children’s Choice* through the 1950s and 1960s (see previous chapter) seem to have succeeded in securing this less-than-

child-friendly song a place in the children's music canon.

My final example of the Muppets' subversive use of original music hall material is 'The bird on Nellie's hat' (ep. 304). The lyrics detail a naïve young man's courtship of a far more experienced woman. The 'saucy' bird on the hat offers asides that reveal Nellie's promiscuity:

'I'll be your little honey, I will promise that!',
 said Nellie as she rolled her dreamy eyes.
 'It's a shame to take the money' said the bird on Nellie's hat.
 'Last night she said the same to Johnny Wise'.
 Then to Nellie, Willie whispered as they fondly kissed,
 'I'll bet you were never kissed like that!'.
 'Well he don't know Nellie like I do!',
 Said the saucy little bird on Nellie's hat.

(Lyrics by Arthur J. Lamb 1906)

The dialogue is delivered by Miss Piggy (as Nellie) and a male pig (as Willie) whilst the main narrative is carried by an older female pig in a purple feather boa. The repeated references to payments for romance, and the purple theme (*The harlot in purple and scarlet*, 2016; *The royal purple silk prostitute*, 2015) seem to cast the older pig as a Madam with Miss Piggy as a prostitute. Whether Henson included these songs to titillate competent viewers, subvert discourses of childhood innocence and/or trash his reputation as a children's entertainer is a matter for debate.

CMQ analysis suggests that Music is the most influential category in making a song attractive to children's culture gatekeepers. Adult-themed music hall songs found their way into mainstream 'family' TV programmes, popular children's radio shows and the repertoires of children's musicians due to their melodies, harmonies, intervals, cadences, structure and metric patterns, rather than the lyrical themes or the sonic qualities of the recordings or performances. Songs featuring double entendre do not score low (or high) on the CMQ due to their codedness, but rather due to other lyrical, musical and sonic factors. As suggested previously, reader competence is not age-dependent. The CMQ is text-focussed and assesses technical

components of songs, elements that can be crafted and manipulated by writers, composers and producers. The examination of *what* adults create for children highlights *how* adults shape childhood culturally.

The changes in tone and content of *The Muppet Show* over its five series suggests that Henson responded to external pressures to tone it down. His initial anarchic blueprint reveals an ambivalent relationship with the mythology of childhood innocence. However, the chaotic tone and unresolved narratives, especially of the early shows, provides an important educational framework, one I suggest below is progressive and empowering for children.

5.5 Progressive education in *The Muppet Show*

Despite Henson's proclamations that *The Muppet Show* was designed to entertain, not educate (Maudlin, 2009, p. 177) it critiques traditional education by communicating a progressive ideology. Maudlin argues that Henson's views on education were shaped by the optimism of the post-war baby boomer generation and mid 1960s counter-cultural hippie ideals (Maudlin, 2009, pp. 171-180). Post-War education was increasingly informed by science, behavioural and cognitive psychology, and studies into child development. Its goal was to prepare children for the world of work. The 1970s was a time of transition between the idealist, liberalism of the 1960s and the commercial standardisation of 1980s (Maudlin, 2009, p. 174). Overly's *The unstudied curriculum: Its impact on children* and Snyder's *The hidden curriculum* (both 1970) were both critical of the limitations and implications of a government-prescribed curriculum, which was felt to inhibit creativity and individualism in children. *The Muppet Show* exemplifies the views of late nineteenth century practitioners such as John Dewey. Like Dewey, Kermit acts a facilitator rather than a didactic teacher. Just as Dewey's *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897) stressed the need for children to express themselves emotionally, creatively and artistically (in *A Brief Overview of Progressive Education*, 2002), so each Muppet has a strongly identifiable individual character which is allowed expression in the

barely-controlled chaos of the Muppet theatre. Henson spoke of how, despite the violence, his Muppets cared for each other, and were part of a (somewhat dysfunctional) extended family. Maudlin notes ‘an implicit compassion that seems to undergird the chaos’ (2009, p. 178). Similarly, Dewey stressed the importance of children’s place in social groups, such as family and wider society. School life, he suggested, ‘should grow gradually out of the home life’ (in Mooney, 2000, p. 5). Like Henson, child psychologist and influential educational thinker Jean Piaget stresses the importance of imagination, curiosity and a child-centred philosophy of learning about life. Piaget was critical of the idea that adults could teach children the complexity of ‘real life’ (Mooney, 2000, p. 63) stressing that a child’s ‘construction is superior to instruction’ (*ibid*, p. 61). Issues of reception and interpretation are central to an understanding of *The Muppet Show* as children’s culture. As discussed previously, children and adults decode the text based on their level of competence. Piaget suggested that children extrinsically develop their understanding of the adult world around them and construct their own meaning (in Mooney, 2000, pp. 61-62). Montessori wrote about how children work with the ideas they are given and are active in their constructing of meaning (Gettman, 1987, p. 10). She specifically stresses the importance of the senses, language and culture in a child’s learning, all, I would argue are actively represented in *The Muppet Show* (Gettman, 1987, p. 24). Henson talked about how children ‘create their own reality’ (Maudlin, 2009, p. 180). In a context where children are agents of construction of meaning, the seemingly-nonsensical activities on *The Muppet Show* album (Arista, 1977) such as ‘The Great Gonzo eats a rubber tire to “Flight of the bumblebee”’ or Fozzie telling jokes whilst roller skating and wiggling his ears (and even doing ventriloquism) form part of a wider non-traditional educational strategy. Maudlin describes this as ‘the most inconspicuous form of critical pedagogy, a non-linear, anti-didactic way of thinking and teaching ... more like real life’ (2009, p. 178).

5.6 Conclusion

The discussions above highlight the ways in which music contributes to constructions of childhood, and the negotiation of children's place in wider society and especially, the role that various types of education play in their lives. It has shown how non-Romantic signifiers such as violence, anarchy, sexuality, chaos, double entendre and archaic references can contribute to children's education, but only when that process is embedded in the wider world of adults. The philosophies of progressive education that stem from the songs of *The Muppet Show* evidence how the dominant discourses of the Romantic and the Evangelical child are not polar opposites; the absence of tropes from the former does not automatically equate into the latter. As such the songs of *The Muppet Show* do not contribute strongly to constructions of childhood based on innocence or delinquency but substantiate alternative narratives of children as family members and as viewers. The use of music hall songs provides children with an engaging and accessible musical form that allows them to not only participate with adults as listeners, viewers and performers (music hall songs are highly singable), but to begin to engage with an adult world full of danger and unresolved narratives. The discourse to which *The Muppet Show* contributes contrasts with that of *Sesame Street* where musical, visual and narrative signifiers of childhood uphold notions of separateness and reflect didactic, adult-derived models of education. In the songs of *The Muppet Show*, Henson offers an alternative to traditional education with a progressive approach that not only challenges children with often-complex adult ideas, but effectively dissolves childhood as a separate category. The provision of rich, multi-layered texts that are open to interpretation, empowers children (and adults) as active participants in the formation of meaning.

The next chapter explores similar questions of how music can be used to construct boundaries based on age. Issues of the representation of children and the degree to which adult issues, especially of sexuality, are considered appropriate for children are discussed. Unlike the wide intergenerationality of *The Muppet Show*, tween music targets a demographic tightly defined by age and gender.

Chapter Six

The Best of Both Worlds: Miley Cyrus, tween music and the up-aging of childhood

On 25 August 2013, Miley Cyrus performed her then-current single 'We can't stop' at a high-profile televised industry event, the MTV Video Music Awards (VMA) ceremony. Dancers dressed as teddy bears and other soft toys (including a zebra) accompanied her onstage. Entering the stage through the tummy of a giant bear, Cyrus joined her dancers in some loosely choreographed moves, stuck out her tongue, and leaned down to touch the floor between her feet. After two minutes of impassioned live vocals, the song segued into Robin Thicke's current hit 'Blurred Lines'.⁸⁴ Cyrus stripped to a flesh-coloured Lycra two-piece, was passed a giant foam hand and remained onstage, dueting with Thicke for the first ninety seconds of his song. She smiled as she danced confidently around Thicke, miming his vocal parts back to him, playfully prodding him with her foam finger, briefly placing it against both his crotch then her own. However, the part of the show that attracted the most attention lasted only five seconds. Standing at the edge of the stage, Cyrus bent down, touched the floor and wiggled her hips a little as Thicke stood behind her, also wiggling slightly. She stood up, made the foam finger stick out forward from between her legs, faked a kiss on Thicke's neck and left the stage.



Figure 8
Miley Cyrus and Robin Thicke perform at the MTV Video Music Awards 2013

⁸⁴ The date-rape controversy surrounding Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines' went mainstream in the months that followed the 2013 VMAs. In March 2015, a court ruling found Thicke and co-writer Pharrell Williams guilty of plagiarising Marvin Gaye's 'Got to give it up'. The writers were fined \$7.3 million.

In the days that followed, the short performance attracted considerable attention on both social (360, 000 'tweets' per minute; Robinson 2013) and mainstream media. The debates in the myriad articles, blogs, and *YouTube* comments published in the immediate aftermath of the VMAs focused almost entirely on Cyrus rather than Thicke. Initial commentators described Cyrus' performance as 'mindlessly vulgar' (Noonan in Bernstein 2013) and 'raunchy porn ... disgusting and disturbing' (Brzezinski in Bernstein, 2013). Pressure group The Parents Television Council complained that MTV had sexually exploited Cyrus and called for future awards ceremonies to be age rated at fourteen (BBC News 2013a). The tabloids seemed both disgusted and fascinated by Cyrus' antics, publishing full-page photos of the by-now iconic 'twerking' incident alongside mock-shock headlines and salacious commentary. Older female pop stars publically posted words of advice to Cyrus. Sinéad O'Connor, writing 'in a spirit of motherliness' asked Cyrus to 'please, in future, say no when you are asked to prostitute yourself' (BBC News 2013b). Annie Lennox was concerned about the effects that Cyrus' performance had on young children, proclaiming 'you don't want to see your seven-year-old girls twerking all over the place' (BBC News 2013c). Raising questions of access to such 'dark' and 'pornographic' material, Lennox asked 'how do you stop your kids being exposed to it?' before bluntly stating 'look, we want to protect our kids'. To many media commentators and to those who felt compelled to offer advice, the innocence of both young audiences (especially girls) and young performers (again, girls) was under threat. Seemingly unrepentant throughout this media storm, Cyrus responded to her critics with a cursory 'you're thinking about it more than I thought about it when I did it' (Anon 2013).

Four main themes began to emerge from the post-VMA media coverage. Firstly, Cyrus' videos and stage performances either empowered young women and girls by redefining the narrow and stereotypical definitions of young female sexuality policed by the media (Evans *et al.* 2010; Penny 2013), or they merely reinforced hetero-patriarchal constructions of gender expectations, thus disempowering young women (BBC News 2013a; BBC News 2013d). Secondly, when discussing Cyrus as an adult (she was twenty at the time), the media frequently conflated her on and off screen personae, making frequent reference to the television series *Hannah Montana*, for

which she secured the title role at the age of eleven (Blue 2013). Thirdly, to the popular media, Cyrus seemed old before her years. She was ‘too sexy too soon’ (Lowe 2003), the latest in a long line of ex-child stars ‘gone bad’. Fourthly and finally, themes of innocence and protection emerged from concerned broadsheet writers and other commentators. Children, they suggested, need protection from Cyrus’ corrupting influence and/or Cyrus needs protection from the corrupting influence of the music industry, Hollywood, and the celebrity lifestyle.

This paper attempts to explain the media’s and increasingly academia’s fascination with Cyrus through an examination of her voice, and an analysis of the composition, and production of selected songs in her recorded repertoire. Predominantly a singer and musical artist, it is notable that sonic and musicological attributes of Cyrus’ recordings and performances are rarely mentioned in the myriad press reports that frequently sensationalise her exploits and utterances, nor in the academic papers that tend to highlight her cultural significance. I argue that the melodies of her songs, and the production techniques used on her voice and recordings reveal the presence of the adult producers, song writers and other adult gatekeepers in the process. This manipulation is central to a wider understanding of children’s culture. Furthermore, I suggest that the aural qualities of Cyrus’ singing and spoken voice contribute to the substantial interest in her as an artist and celebrity. The chapter examines how Cyrus’ performance personae (on stage and screen), song narratives, and personal biography have combined to inform her celebrity status, and sustain media and academic interest. With reference to the work of O’Connor (2013) and Whiteley (2005), I place Cyrus into historical context and a lineage of singing child stars. Analysis of specific sonic qualities (pitch and timbre) of Cyrus’ singing voice is central to my argument. The resonant ‘adult’ voice she possessed as a child (as *Hannah Montana*) challenges socially-constructed norms of both age and gender, and fuels the perceptions of premature aging, precocious sexualisation and perceived loss of innocence central to media narratives. I compare her voice on the songs of *Hannah Montana* (recorded when she was twelve to fifteen years old) with that on her solo albums and discuss how auto-tuning and vocal sweetening on the *Hannah Montana* recordings reveal the

power relations involved in the constructions of both childhood, and young female sexuality.

I discuss how the context of musical genre affects the meaning and reception of the deep and aurally-damaged young voice by comparing how tween music, opera, punk and African-American music differ in their normalisation of vocal attributes and aging. Finally, the paper explores some of the problems inherent in the transition of child-stars into credible adult performers and discusses the liminal cultural space offered to ex-child stars by the media. This process, I argue, has been eased by Cyrus' perceived precocious sexuality, derived, in part, through the reception of her voice.

Tween music's main target audience is pre- and peri-pubescent girls (Kehily and Swann eds. 2003). Highly commercialised and aggressively marketed, tween blurs the socially and culturally constructed boundary between childhood and adulthood, in which innocence (especially sexual innocence) and its protection is a defining trope. The global dominance of a small number of entertainment corporations, driven by the digitisation of media content and targeted marketing strategies, has seen the children's culture market expand rapidly in the twenty-first century⁸⁵ (Clark 2007; Linn 2005; Lindstrom 2004; Mayo and Nairn 2009; Schor 2004), leading to fundamental aesthetic changes in children's musical products. Twentieth century children's music was dominated by folk music, music hall, and *Disney's* family values. Education, morality and community were the order of the day, frequently served with an adult-derived sense of fun. Parents and teachers were the main target audience for recordings and song books (Dunham 1961, in Bickford 2012); children's music was largely purchased *for* children, rather than *by* them. Until the 1980s, children's music recordings were often compromised by modest production budgets and limited distribution. Folk albums for children were released mostly on independent labels, and, as in the case of *Folkways* artists Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, sold in very small numbers (usually a few hundred copies; Place 2012). Armenian-Canadian folk singer Raffi's commercial success in the 1970s and 1980s was the exception rather than the norm. Pop as a genre rarely featured as a category of children's music (EMI's Steve Pritchard in Bickford

⁸⁵ Tweens spend at least \$1.7 billion p.a. of their own money (Clark, 2007, p. 119), and influence around \$600 billion p.a. (Linn, 2004, p. 1). At least £440 million of this is spent on music (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 5). Total advertising and marketing budgets for children's products top \$40 billion p.a. (Barber, 2007, p. 13).

2012, p. 424). However, in the 1990s, children's music began to adopt the aesthetics of the type of chart pop traditionally consumed by older teens and young adults. The new 'tween' pop had 'sophisticated production values, professional songwriting, and talented and stylish performers' (Bickford 2012, p. 417). Unlike the community-based anti-corporate ethos of Guthrie, Seeger and Raffi, or the BBC's didactic, educational impulses, tween music's primary motive is commercial, its demographic identified, defined and forged by sophisticated audience research techniques (Kline 1993, pp. 236-275; Linn 2005, pp. 26-30). Tween music is shaped by large production budgets and pre-launch focus groups of children, before being marketed virally online, often by children to other children (Mayo and Nairn 2009, p. 49).

The emergence of tween culture and the issues raised by its production, and reception are documented in Baker's 'Rock on, baby!': pre-teen girls and popular music' (2001), Coulter's *Tweening the girl: The crystallization of the tween market* (2009) and Bickford's *The new 'tween' music industry: The Disney Channel, Kidz Bop and an emerging childhood counterpublic* (2012). The authors note the highly-gendered nature of tween products and the often-complex issues raised by the inclusion of young girls as both consumers and performers. Coulter identifies the Spice Girls' success in 1996 as the moment when tween emerged as 'a specific, segmented marketing niche carved out of the transitory and transformational spaces between childhood and adolescence' (2009, p. iii). She describes tween as a 'mediated marketplace' in which the industrial disciplines of marketing, merchandise, retail and media are symbiotic in their commercial exploitation of young consumers. The rise in the number of middle class women in work and the application of feminist discourse to the area of childhood studies both contributed to the development of tween (p. 6). Coulter suggests that the consumption of tween products is central to the identities forged by young girls as 'transitional customers'. Bickford describes how tween culture inhabits the liminal space between adulthood and childhood (2012). This, she suggests, has focused protectionist arguments whilst forging commercial and cultural identities for its young participants. Baker's ethnographic study documents how girls aged eight to eleven consumed cultural products (music, television, films and images) that were traditionally marketed at older teens and adolescents (2001). The issues raised help understand

tween as a mediatised marketing category, and the attendant concerns of cultural commentators, and parents. Baker describes how the girls are ‘eavesdropping’ on adolescence and ‘listening in on a culture to which they may desperately aspire... but which is not yet theirs’ (p. 363). Marketing teams talk about ‘KGOY’; kids getting older younger (Clark 2007, p. 118; Montgomery 2007, in Bickford 2012, p. 20). In a symbiotic shift, tween culture has not only resulted in the ‘up-aging of the child’, and the ‘down-aging of the teen’, but also the infantilisation (‘kiddification’) of adulthood (Barber 2007; Coulter 2009, p.161; Postman 1982).

Increasingly, children are not only the target market for their own musical products, they are also the performers and presenters. In the 20th century, children’s music artists such as Raffi, The Singing Kettle, and Rod, Jane and Freddy, and children’s television presenters were adults who adopted naïf, anodyne personae, projecting innocence and asexuality. Today’s presenters and stars of children’s music are children themselves. As graduates of *Disney’s The Mickey Mouse Club* (Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera), *Nickelodeon* (Ariana Grande) *Disney*-funded films such as *High School Musical* (Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens) and *Camp Rock* (The Jonas Brothers), or *YouTube* (Justin Bieber), tween music artists are often just a few years older than their target audience. Kennedy employs the Deleuzian concept of ‘becoming’ to discuss how this transition into adulthood forms a central part of the celebrity appeal of these young female stars (2014, p. 238). Young female celebrities are subject to far greater media scrutiny and, it has been argued, stars such as Cyrus are subject to increasingly narrow definitions of acceptable behaviour (Penny 2013). Furthermore, female celebrities are represented in a more sexualised way than their male equivalents (Lewis and Shewmaker 2011). Naturalised tropes of childhood sexuality informed by notions of innocence and protection are perpetuated by a mass media seemingly reluctant to move beyond dyadic representations. Concepts of purity, simplicity, naivety, and mythical worlds untainted by adulthood are central to children’s culture and the construction of modern Western childhood. Themes of vulnerability, of blank slates, and a ‘safe, protected world of play, fantasy, and innocence’ (Stephens 1995, p. 14) underpin the books, films and records made for children. However, the nature of childhood innocence, as an idealised adult construction, has changed historically.

Positive qualities such as sensitivity, divinity and associations with nature have been replaced with a vacuous sexuality whereby children are 'little more than sexuality-not-there' creating 'an unthinkable eroticism that required us to think of little else' (Kincaid 2010). To the sensationalist celebrity-obsessed press, children are either good or evil, angel or devil, innocent or knowing, virginal or slutty (Lamb, Graling and Wheeler 2013). As Bickford notes, 'there does not seem to be any middle ground available to young woman artists between 'godliness' and the 'good girl gone bad' (2012, p. 427). Moralistic and concerned expressions of protection often accompany images that seem to fetishise the bodies of young girls. For example, many reports of the controversy surrounding Annie Leibowitz's photographs of Cyrus' bare back, taken when Cyrus was fifteen years old, describe the photos in detail and include the photos in the article, whilst seeming to offer condemnation of the images (Eells 2013; Fitsimmons 2008; Kincaid 2010). As in Victorian times, childhood sexuality remains both forbidden yet fascinating.

Debates around the commercial and cultural exploitation of children, as both consumers and as young performers, often polarise around the degree of agency that they possess, or are allowed to express, in the commercial market that has rapidly opened up around them. Media interest in Cyrus highlights the reaction to her agentic expression of sexuality within societal constructions of innocence. I argue that Cyrus voice and use of performance personae subvert these dominant dyadic narratives. The conflation of her on-screen personae (most notably the dual roles she played as a child in *Hannah Montana*⁸⁶), her characterisation of song narratives, and her mediated lived biography contributes to the media's adoption of a normative male paedophilic gaze. Cyrus' post-*Hannah Montana* recordings reveal the unshackling of her voice from Foucauldian enforced perfectionism. Diminished audio processing, greater melodic ranges and enhanced dynamics are freedoms that are symptomatic of her increasing authority over her music and career.

⁸⁶ The character Hannah Montana was supposedly fourteen years old in the series. At eleven, Cyrus deliberately dressed older at auditions to get the part (Edwards, 2008, pp. 8-9).

6.1 Hannah Montana, Miley Stewart and Miley Cyrus

The daughter of country-pop star Billy Ray Cyrus, Cyrus sang onstage with her father onstage from the age of two (Edwards 2008, pp. 6-7). Acting and performing professionally from the age of nine, Cyrus found fame playing the character *Hannah Montana* in the eponymous *Disney Channel* television series, a part she secured at the age of eleven.³ Running for four seasons (98 episodes) from 2006 and spawning five albums, a feature length film, and a hugely successful concert tour, *Hannah Montana* revolves around the main character's dual lives as an everyday 'girl next door' (Miley Stewart) and a successful pop star (Hannah Montana), a secret that she strives to keep from her on-screen friends. In *Hannah Montana*, the lines between Cyrus' lived and scripted biographies are blurred. Cyrus' real-life father appears in the show as her dad (character name Robbie Stewart) whilst her real-life godmother, Dolly Parton, appears as herself. In 2007, Cyrus performed as Hannah Montana in the 'Best of Both Worlds' concert tour. Her real-life older sister Brandi played lead guitar in the band (Edwards 2008, p. 28). Discussing her burgeoning solo singing career in 2008 (and aged fifteen), Cyrus articulates the conflation her on-screen, on-stage and 'real life' personae. She states:

I can't wait to be known as Miley Cyrus the singer. Disney thought it would be great if not only Hannah Montana was a singer, but Miley as well. They've been talking about Hannah Montana opening for Miley Cyrus and for us to do concerts together. (in Edwards, 2008, p. 55)

Frith points out that pop singers are similar to film actors in that they have to perform not only their 'pop star' persona but also any characterisation involved in the narrative of the lyrics of a particular song (in Auslander 2004, p. 6). Referring to this as a 'double enactment', Frith suggests that 'the pop star's art is to keep both acts in play at once'. Furthermore, pop audiences read pop performers as 'personally expressive ... singing in their own persons, from their own experience'. Using David Bowie as an example, Auslander discusses the areas of difference and of crossover between the real person

(Bowie's birth name is David Jones), the performance persona (Bowie himself as a performer, his alter egos Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane, the Thin White Duke) and the characters involving the narratives of individual songs (2008, p. 6). He suggests that performance personae are central to an audience's understanding of the 'real' person and asserts that any understanding of the real person is inferred from the various performance personae and characters employed (p. 11). To Frith, the real person is the least accessible aspect for audiences (p. 6). Despite the complex intertextual mash-up of signs and signifiers in *Hannah Montana*, her development into an idiosyncratically-sexualised 'adult' artist allows competent fans to locate some of the 'real' Cyrus' through the cracks in the *Disney* construction. Indeed, in reference to Cyrus, Kennedy suggests that young female stars who transition into adult women celebrities require an 'authenticity of the self' (2014, p. 227). She refers to how, in *Hannah Montana*, Cyrus repeatedly refers to her cultural and geographical roots, and how her girl-next-door character/persona allows her to 'stays true to herself' throughout her pop star alter-ego's adventures (p. 228). Furthermore, Kennedy suggests that such inner authenticity is revealed in the process rather than being externally constructed (2014, p. 227). Drawing on Rojek, she points out that 'achieved' celebrity (rather than 'ascribed' or 'attributed' celebrity) requires a star to 'keep it real' through foregrounding a combination of hard work, natural talent and personal worthiness (2001, in 2014, p. 227). As with Bowie, Cyrus does not perform under her birth name (she was born Destiny Hope Cyrus) adding a further remove to the location of an identifiable 'real' person behind her multiple self-referential personae. The overlapping, intertextual references of her live performances, videos, television show, film and commercial products exemplify Baudrillard's simulacrum in which the 'real' resembles itself (1998a, p. 178) and audiences are unable to orientate themselves in a 'depthless' world of surfaces, and exteriors (1998b, p. 45). Any sense of the 'real' inherent in the 'original' is lost whilst the 'artificial, manufactured character of the whole environment' is foregrounded (1998a, p. 115). Goosetree describes a similar 'unresolvable tension between fantasy and reality' in *The Monkees* (1988, p. 52). To Dyer 'star images are always extensive, intertextual, multimedia' (1986, p. 3). A potentially more empowering concept for the reception of postmodern products is that of competence (Riffaterre in Selden 1989, p. 126) whereby audiences can consciously

and subconsciously connect with wider connotations through exposure to and discussions about the industrial, historical, political and social networks that frame cultural objects. Fans who are competent with Cyrus' previous work, and who have read, discussed and critiqued it are better able to resist and subvert hegemonic media representations which rely merely on 'surface' and 'exterior' narratives.

Genre is another key concept through which the audience comes to understand an artist and their work. The expectations, codes, limitations and norms framed by genre affect the audience's reception of recorded products, performance personae, the characterisation involved in delivering specific songs, and, consequently, the 'real' person behind the construct. Academic discussions point to the constructed and fluid nature of authenticity in specific settings. Potter draws on Bakhtin to discuss the multiple authenticities at play in the construction of hip-hop identities, describing the genre as a 'heteroglossaic space' (1995 in Burke 2008, p. 1). Hess highlights the conflict of identity between a number of hip-hop performance personae (including Chuck D) and the 'real' people behind them, describing the ambiguities generated by this conflict as ironic (2005 in Burke 2008, p. 1). Most rappers adopt hip-hop performance personae, stereotypically involving materially aspirational streetwise braggadocio. Burke suggests that 'the listener's dominant unwillingness or inability to distinguish between artist and persona goes most of the way to creating these ironies' and that 'the conflation of "reality" and "falsity" may cause, over the long term, a problematic loss of intention and importance of a text' (2008, p. 5). Chiming with Riffaterre's notions of audience competence, Gaunt highlights the need for copious background knowledge when deciding whether the irony inherent in the conflict between person and persona is intentional. He suggests that a listener/viewer requires 'a detailed knowledge of the personal, linguistic, cultural and social references of the speaker and [their] audience' (1989 in Burke 2008, p. 9). *The Monkees* appeared at a time when upbeat, modernist Apollonian pop was being rapidly superseded by the Dionysian existentialism of rock. *The Monkees* television show fell squarely into the first camp. Like *Hannah Montana*, extensive auditions were held, scripts were learned, acting craft was developed, and songs were (largely) professionally written and performed. Similar to Cyrus' transition into a 'serious' adult artist, confusion arose when The Monkees

(actors pretending to be a band) toured as a 'real' band, and had to confront expectations of rock authenticity. As Dyer puts it when discussing film star Joan Crawford, 'the processes of manufacturing an appearance are often thought to be more real than the appearance itself – appearance is mere illusion, is surface' (1986, p. 1).

6.2 The mixed messages in Miley's voice

Children, especially girls, with adult mannerisms and voices have long aroused the interest of the record-buying, and cinema-viewing public. The combination of 'grown-up' gestures and childlike physical appearances, contextualised by notions of 'socially prescribed innocence' (Whiteley 2005, p. 28) has led to the eroticisation and 'questionable appeal' (Whiteley 2005, p. 1) of female child stars such as Shirley Temple, Judy Garland, Brenda Lee, Helen Shapiro, Lulu, Aaliyah and Britney Spears. I place Cyrus in this lineage and argue that comments about her precocious sexuality are informed, in part, by qualities inherent in her singing and spoken voice. Brenda Lee, was said to possess a 'self-conscious sexual energy that belies her age' (Whiteley 2005, p.1). As a thirteen-year-old rockabilly singer, Lee was dubbed 'Little Miss Dynamite, the little girl with the grown up reactions' (p. 26). The sexual knowingness implicit in adult-penned songs such as 'Sweet Nothin's' (Brunswick, 1959), 'I want to be loved' (Brunswick, 1960) and 'Let's jump the broomstick' (a euphemism for 'let's get married'; Brunswick, 1959) were delivered with 'raucous lust' (Larkin 1999, in Whiteley 2005, p. 26) in a deep, and occasional aurally-damaged voice. Helen Shapiro had been in a band since the age of ten (with Mark Feld, later Marc Bolan). Her deep and 'soulful' basso-profondo voice was mistaken for a boy by record executives (Myers 2011) yet provides a suitable aural compliment to the theme of her debut single 'Don't Treat Me Like a Child' (Columbia 1961) in which the fourteen year-old Shapiro sings 'Don't think that I dream childish dreams ... don't mother me. That makes me wild ... don't wanna be so meek and mild'. Equally, Lulu had been fronting a rhythm and blues band from the age of twelve before hitting the charts with her version of 'Shout' aged fifteen (Decca 1964). Although lacking the sonorous depth of pitch of Lee, Shapiro or Cyrus, Lulu's

aggressive vocal delivery on 'Shout' causes distortion in her higher register (especially on the 'yeah, yeah' sections). This aurally-coded 'soulfulness', largely derived from her aping of the Isley Brother's original vocal delivery (her version is actually a semi-tone lower than the original), authenticates the existential pain inherent in the lyrics, and convincingly connects Lulu, the girl, with the orgasmic jouissance ('throw my head back') of the song's sexualised theme.

Through considerations of how adulthood and a loss of innocence manifest themselves vocally, I argue that Cyrus, and other girls with deep, resonant voices, subvert normative socio-cultural constructions of both age and gender, whilst fueling the perceptions of premature sexualisation that are central to the exploitation-masquerading-as-protection narrative of mainstream media. Notions of childhood sexuality are informed not only by gender but also class (Kehily and Montgomery 2004; Kennedy 2014, pp. 231-2). The role of the young working-class seductress can be located in the transformative narratives of texts such as 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Annie', 'Gigi', 'My Fair Lady' and the films of Shirley Temple (Walkerdine 1997, p. 258).

Walkerdine suggests that 'the eroticized little girl presents a fantasy of otherness to the working-class girl. She is inscribed as the one who can make a transformation, which is also a self-transformation, which is also a seductive allure' (p. 263). Talent shows such as 'The X-Factor' perpetuate this narrative. Cyrus' working-class roots inform both media reports and, on occasion, the content of her stage show.⁸⁷ Class-coded media rhetoric such as 'ghetto', 'trashy' and 'down home' allude to Cyrus' Southern 'white trash' past, and provide a stark contrast with her glitzy Hollywood present (Lamb, Graling and Wheeler 2013, pp. 176-177). There is an element of resistance at play; 'rather than seeing her as a rebellious sexualized teen, she is a rebellious representative of working or lower class Southern girls who will not be put down by 'snobbish' Northerners' (Lamb, Graling and Wheeler 2013, p. 176). A background in country music provides Cyrus with an authenticity lacking in pop (Kennedy 2014, pp. 231-2). The presence of her father and Godmother provide a nostalgic rootedness for her in *Hannah Montana*. References to horses, family and a rural Southern 'hillbilly' life authenticate her authenticity. However, Cyrus' perceived femininity still falls short of

⁸⁷ Cyrus' *Teen Choice Awards* performance of 'Party in the USA' in 2009 seemed to consciously play up to her class-informed media identity. The stage set featured a full size trailer park trailer through which Cyrus entered.

prescribed normative middle-class standards, something that her on-screen Malibu life provides (Kennedy 2014, pp. 232).

In the audition footage for *Hannah Montana*, filmed when she was eleven years old (Miley Cyrus's Audition tape for *Hannah Montana*, 2012) Cyrus' speaking voice is deep, rounded and resonant. Her Southern accent is delivered with a brassy confidence that seems to belie her age. I argue that chronologically-atypical attributes in children's voices, such as low pitch, and ravaged timbre not only subvert normative constructions of childhood, but inform media reports of the perceived loss of innocence of young female singing stars.

6.2.1 Pitch

Early episodes of the show reveal a speaking voice a good deal deeper in pitch than her female co-stars, many of who were older than Cyrus' twelve or thirteen years. Her voice has a ravaged roughness, described in the *2009 Hannah Montana Yearbook* as 'fantastically husky' (Edwards 2008, p. 14). Compared to many of her singing contemporaries, Cyrus is rarely noted for her technical abilities. However, her vocal range is impressive. Her lowest recorded note is a B2 in the song 'We can't stop' (2013). This technically puts her below a classical contralto. The Fach system used to classify opera singers is based on a range of factors such as the character of the person being portrayed by the singer, and the age, height and build of the vocalist themselves. Cyrus would be either a Dramatische Alt ('powerful, full, metallic') or a Tiefer Alt ('low, full, warm'; Banis, 2012). An analysis of well-known popular music singers' vocal ranges reveals that Cyrus has a lowest note below many of the twenty-five female (and some male) singers on the list; Adele, Karen Carpenter, Dusty Springfield and others all have higher lowest notes (Anon 2015a). DeMore and Veltman (2011) suggest that many women with deep voices who sing in their lower register are often accompanists in choirs, rather than soloists. They point out that Tiefer Alt singers in the Fach system can sing low but can still have very wide ranges. They highlight a number of case studies of women with deep voices and conclude that perceptions of lowness of pitch are

affected by timbre. Full, rich, round voices, such as those of Anita Baker or Cher offer the illusion of depth, whilst higher, more 'ravaged' voices may be perceived as lower in pitch. Timbre and depth are also linked to specific racial/cultural tropes; the deep voices of Odetta and Mavis Staples are in a tradition of female African-American singers. Low singing women defy gender expectations and perceptions of maleness may result (DeMore and Veltman 2011). The damaged huskiness of Cyrus' voice leads to perceptions of a depth of pitch that is belied by her overall vocal range; she can sing up to a high E6 (in 'Just a girl', 2009). Contraltos generally sing up to about F5, nearly an octave below. Only four of the female singers on the list have higher recorded top note (Anon, 2015a).⁸⁸ Perceptions of a singer's age are often informed by their vocal pitch, a characteristic inherent to the Fach system. High soprano voices (the soubrette category in Fach) are often linked to young, innocent characters, while lower ranges (mezzo-soprano) or heavier voices (dramatic soprano) tend to get cast as vamps, tramps (such as Carmen), and older women. Butler (in Rodger 2004) has described how gender is performative and that gender identities are constructed through visual and aural tropes and other social gestures. An analysis of the voice of Annie Lennox reveals 'sonic cross dressing' resulting from her use of both her resonant, low register and her higher pitched head voice. Wood describes this as 'a merging ... of 'butch' authority and 'femme' ambiguity, an acceptance and integration of the male and female' (Wood 1994, p. 32 in Rodger 2004, p. 20). Lennox used a drag king aesthetic in some Eurhythmics videos leading to speculation about both her gender and her sexuality. Music hall star Vesta Tilley was a male impersonator who used dress and mannerisms to portray aristocratic toffs, soldiers and other male stereotypes. Like Lennox and Cyrus, Tilley was hounded by the press to discuss her sexuality. Unlike her more recent counterparts, recordings of Tilley's voice (for example 'Jolly good luck to the girl who loves a soldier') do not evidence the timbral ambiguity central to the subversive gender identities of Lennox and Cyrus.

During her *Hannah Montana* years, Cyrus' age, height (1.65m, 5'5") and slight build allowed her to convincingly perform the part of a young, innocent girl, an innocence tempered with a large dose of sarcastic, Californian street-wise sassiness which seems

⁸⁸ The four higher singers than Cyrus in the list are Mariah Carey (G7), Christina Aguilera (C#7), and Tina Turner (G6) and Kelly Clarkson (G6).

to increase as the series progress. Her transition into the adult market as a sexualised post-tween has proved less difficult for Cyrus than for other ex-child stars such as Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, and Amanda Bynes, aided, I would argue, by her adult-signifying vocal qualities. In 'Soprano masculinities', McClary suggests that high-singing men take on a range of transgressive sexual personae dependent on genre and other social, historical and cultural norms (2013). She points out that the meanings derived from breaking these norms are not universal and that, depending on context, the high male voice may code as gay (Sylvester) or straight (Bee Gees) in the same genre (disco), or even be considered hyper-masculine, as in the cases of Prince, Steven Tyler, and Axl Rose. Cyrus' expansive and versatile husky contralto allows her to transgress a number of sexual personae that may have been inaccessible to Taylor Swift (the 'good girl' flip side to Cyrus' bad), Ariana Grande or Vanessa Hudgens.

6.2.2 Timbre

Allowing for the fact the Cyrus had to 'play older' to get the part of the fourteen-year-old lead, her eleven-year-old audition voice sounds 'lived in', ragged and ravaged. The confidence of her delivery and the sassiness of her characterisation compound the perception that she appears to be old before her years. Her resonant and aurally-damaged voice challenges socially-constructed norms of age, gender and sexuality. Western children's voices, especially those of girls, are normalised as high in pitch and pure in tone. Celebrated child vocalists such as Aled Jones, Charlotte Church and Michael Jackson exemplified this association of sonority, biography and culturally-constructed assumptions. Transgressive sexual personae suggests that an audience's perception of the singing voice is context specific. As well as the examples of pitch mentioned above, McClary adds timbre, using castrati singers as an example. Surgical procedures before the onset of puberty preserved the purity of tone of the childhood voice into adulthood (2013). Such 'transfigured sonority' was highly prized in seventeenth century Italy and, I would argue, purity of vocal tone is still seen an important signifier of childhood innocence. The absence of this aural purity codes as lived experience and an encroachment of adult knowingness into childhood. Child stars

who maintain vocal purity into adult maturity are associated with youthfulness and, for young female artists, I would suggest, virginity. The hoarseness in the voices of female blues, rhythm and blues, and soul singers such as Bessie Smith, Etta James and Tina Turner connote the adult nature of their genre-defined song lyrics, full of hard living, abusive men and the hedonistic pleasures of the flesh. A damaged voice equates to a rupture in the perceived purity that is so important to the branding of young tween stars, many of whom seemed obliged to publically pledge 'no sex before marriage' through the wearing of promise rings. Female child stars and ex-child stars such as Cyrus are frequent targets of speculation about their romantic relationships, and to what degree other markers of adulthood, such as drink and drugs have encroached on their young lives.

Through the conflation of person, persona and character, the voice and the biography of the vocalist intertwine. Brackett notes how the ravaged timbre of Billie Holiday's voice is inexorably linked to perceptions of her drug use, media reports of her hard living, and ultimately to the attribution of meaning to her songs (2000, p. 44). Biographies of Judy Garland (Clarke 2009; Shipman 1994) and Amy Winehouse (Newkey-Burden 2011) note the deterioration of these young women's voices through their use of drugs and alcohol. The 'damaged innocence' ingrained in the voice then becomes part of the biographical narrative as to why these stars turned to drink and drugs in the first place (Brackett 2000, p. 44). Responding to Barthes' discussions of 'the grain of the voice', Frith asserts the importance of the appreciation of the voice in a listener's perception of the physicality of the body ('voice as body'; 1996, p. 191), stating that 'the voice seems particularly expressive of the body; it gives the listener access to it without mediation'. Frith describes how bodily-derived singing techniques, such as throatiness and nasality affect timbre and thus audience reception (1996, p. 191). In reference to their bodily origins, lower notes resonate in the throat and the mouth, higher notes mostly in the head. Classical and Renaissance ideas about the relationship between animalistic Dionysian corporeality and cerebral Apollonian humanism are deeply ingrained in modern Western society. The reception of timbre and pitch are mediated discursively, and as Frith points out 'we hear voices ... accord to our own sexual pleasures and preferences' (1996, p. 195). The gendered reception of

the voice must be understood structurally (1996, p. 194). Musical genre as an industrial-aesthetic-historical construction provides this structure.

6.3 Genre

Punk challenged normative attitudes to gender and age; vocal styles traditionally associated with young women were subverted through aggression and ironic delivery. Ari Up was fourteen when she started The Slits. As a fifteen, sixteen and seventeen-year-old, Ari and her band were at the heart of the London punk scene, gigging, touring and building close relationships with the Sex Pistols, and the Clash. Often overlooked by scholars of child singers, Ari Up's kinetic, confident and sometimes confrontational performance style, was accompanied by a voice that belied traditional notions of femininity and childhood. German by birth, her voice blends resonant depth of pitch, and exuberant screams, with the harsh, clipped tones and timbre derived from her native language. The polar opposite of Ann Stephens' delicate received pronunciation on her 1941 hit 'Buckingham Palace', Ari Up's voice combines those of Nico and Björk, two other female singers who have sung in English rather than their native languages. Malcolm McLaren's manipulation of Annabella Lwin, lead singer of Bow Wow Wow (she was thirteen when she was asked to audition), had all the hallmarks of the male pedophilic gaze.⁸⁹ Yet her angry screams and dissonant out-of-control shrieks 'work as rude disruptions of expected female melodiousness' (Brown 2001, pp. 456-7). Lwin's voice and performance style lays challenge to McLaren's (and the band's) control over her, and redefines how 'anger can be heard apart from its usual masculinized frequency' by linking it to 'personal pain and to related practices of confession' (Brown 2011, pp. 476-77).

If, as Frith asserts, 'how we hear a musical voice ... is tied into how we hear music' (p. 197), and context and genre influence our subjective reception, then Cyrus' child voice needs to be considered within the framework of the commercial youth-oriented pop

⁸⁹ McLaren composed highly-suggestive lyrics about the sexualisation of children for Lwin to sing. His concept for the cover of Bow Wow Wow's 1982 album *Last of the Mohicans* featured a photograph of the fourteen-year-old Lwin as part of a pastiche of Manet's painting *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

music from which it derived. On recordings (and undoubtedly in concert), Cyrus' singing voice is processed to meet the requirements of the genre. A plethora of production techniques affect the timbre and hence the reception of the voice. Recorded when she was thirteen and fourteen years old, Cyrus' first album *Hannah Montana* (Walt Disney Records, 2006) is a polished pop production typical of its year of release. Alongside Cyrus' lead vocal, songs such as 'The best of both worlds' and 'Pumping up the party' feature multiply-layered vocal takes, harmonies and a range of production tricks that have the effect of smoothing and sweetening much of the harshness inherent in Cyrus' natural voice. Dynamic equalization, and the addition of reverbs and delays all serve to give the voice the processed sound favoured by modern commercial pop. The album's release coincided with a peak in sales of Apple's iPod and with the popularity of mp3 format on which portable digital players rely. As such, *Hannah Montana* bears the aural hallmarks of exceptionally high levels of compression as producers attempted to make their tracks sound 'louder' on iPods and the internet. Hyper compression across whole recordings create an 'iron bar' volume profile; the quietest note on a violin will sound as loud as rock drummer, a whisper as loud as a scream. As a result, Cyrus voice on *Hannah Montana* lacks the dynamic variation that would confer emotion in a live, unmediated setting. This limitation is mirrored in the compositions where 'whisper-to-a-scream' moments where the music moves swiftly from quiet to loud (or vice versa) are notably absent. Dynamic consistency, whether in the production, the composition, or Cyrus' delivery, equates to controlled confidence, and a surety of emotion commensurate with the setting of the television show, and the youthful trappings of pop as a genre. Sighs and screams connote heartbreak, loss, pain and Lacanian *jouissance*, adult emotions downplayed in tween pop. Similarly, the auto-tuning of Cyrus' voice is apparent, particularly on her second album, 2007's *Hannah Montana 2: Meet Miley Cyrus* (Walt Disney Records, 2006).⁹⁰ Although sometimes used for novelty effect (Cher's 'Believe' being the exemplar, WEA, 1998), auto-tuning is driven by industrial norms and a specious, and Foucauldian quest for perfection. The disciplining and artificial correction of children's singing voices by adults may be viewed as ideologically suspect. Child singers from the past were often prized for the authenticity

⁹⁰ On Cyrus' second album, the songs 'Good and broken' and 'Right here' feature the most obvious use of auto-tuning.

of their vocal delivery. The pitch wobbles, timing issues, and idiosyncratic pronunciation by child singers such as Ann Stephens, St. Winifred's School Choir, Little Jimmy Osmond or on Clive Dunn's 'Grandad' translated into innocence, naivety and lack of experience, confirming social norms about children.

The manipulation and correction of Cyrus' child voice is a good example of how adults *always* shape children's music to their own ends, their ideologies writ large over the songs that they write, produce, select, purchase and broadcast for children. Cyrus' 'grown up' voice framed in the body of a child provides an excellent metaphor for this power relationship. O'Connor has highlighted how in the 1920s and 1930s, Hollywood child stars such as Shirley Temple were screen angels, larger than life, almost Christ-like figures, somehow beyond childhood, and starkly different from the adults who composed the vast majority of their audience (2013). Modern day tween stars and young television presenters are overwhelmingly the peers of their audience. Increasingly, children sell adult ideology to other children through the many sophisticated marketing strands of children's culture industry.

Genre and context are essential to a full understanding of the aspects of the voice that signify aging. The same vocal gesture may connote both youth and maturity in different settings. For example, improvisation may signify free-spirited naivety, unshackled from composed constraints (as in the young Joni Mitchell), *and* the technical confidence that comes with maturity (Ella Fitzgerald, Amy Winehouse). Melismatic non-worded sounds may signify the unrestrained joy of youth (Björk) *and* the existential pain of experience (Mahalia Jackson, Mavis Staples). Equally, the use of vibrato may signify youthful energy when it is short and fast (the pixie-like shimmering tremolo in the voices of the young Judy Garland or Marc Bolan), the confidence and technique that comes with maturity (the long, slow vibrato in the operatic voice of Elvis), or a deliberate ploy to mask pitch errors in the aging voice (the older Judy Garland). Characterisation of a song's narrative may require a vocalist to 'act' younger or older, especially in musical theatre, opera or the work of theatrical pop artists such as David Bowie, Kate Bush or Tom Waits.

6.4 Musical aging and the transitioning of child stars

The rebranding of child stars is fraught with difficulty. Female ex-child singing stars have two major obstacles to overcome in their successful transitioning into credible 'adult' artists able to sustain a career over a number of album cycles and make a healthy return on the investment of record companies. Firstly, innocence and naivety must give way to adult knowingness. The adult pop-star persona is as much of a construct as that of the child-star; careful consideration of aesthetics and repertoire are required. Auslander has highlighted the dynamic and delicate nature of the transitioning of an artist's persona. He states:

When and how quickly a performer's persona may evolve, if at all, and in what directions, are subject to delicate negotiations with the audience. Miscalculation can result in anything from a temporary setback to the end of a performing career, though the performer's only alternative often is to freeze a popular persona in the hope of retaining the loyalty of its original audience (this is what performers on the oldies concert circuits must do). (2004, p. 9)

Disney have a long-established process of converting their Mousketeers (such as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, Ariana Grande), television and film stars (*High School Musical's* Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens) into 'sincere, non-ironic' adult stars (Bickford 2012, p. 426).

The second obstacle for Cyrus and others is the limited range of sexual expression offered to young female stars by the media. A deliberate rebranding of child stars often takes place around seventeen to eighteen years of age, and for women, this involves a closely-negotiated attempt to attract an adult male audience through sexualisation (Lamb and Brown, 2006, in Lamb, Grayling and Wheeler 2013). Very few young female performers successfully transcend their child-star origins (Whiteley, 2005). Those that do are heavily branded and subject to a deliberately short life-cycle career in which youthfulness, and narrow definitions of appearance, and behaviour are critical factors

(Linn, 2005). Gender disparities in the acceptable expression of sexuality means that the transitioning of young male stars is less problematic; the equally-narrow definitions of masculinity derived from the muscles, tattoos, and facial hair of Justins Timberlake and Bieber, and the (as yet non-tattooed) Nick Jonas pass largely unquestioned under the media's hetero-normative gaze. Ex-*Nickelodeon* star Ariana Grande commented:

If a woman TALKS about sex openly ... she is shamed! But if a man talks or RAPS freely about all the women (or more commonly used "bitches" / hoes" ... how lovely) he's had ... he is regaled. (Twitter, 7 June 2015)

The typical career arc for young female stars involves the transitioning of a 'good girl' into a 'hot mess', and the need to 'balance mainstream accessibility with differentiating features that do not step too far outside the boundaries of familiarity' (Lieb 2014). Arrests (Bieber, Lohan), trips to rehab (Bieber, Lohan Efron, Spears, Winehouse, *Harry Potter's* Daniel Radcliffe) and public displays of 'nervous exhaustion' (Spears, Demi Lovato, Bynes) may be seen as both the result of the pressures of transitioning, and/or calculated media-baiting steps essential to the career re-launch of ex-child stars.

A brief examination of Cyrus' post-*Hannah Montana* recorded output reveals how she has, in many ways, broken with the *Disney*/tween formula, and forged her own idiosyncratic way into adult music, whilst retaining some of the traits of childhood inexorably linked to her past. Taken from 2013's *Bangerz* album (RCA), 'We can't stop' features lyrical content that contrasts starkly with *Disney's* traditional family values. Originally offered to R&B singer Rihanna, 'We can't stop' describes a hedonistic party scene of sex ('We can love who we want. We can kiss who we want.'), drugs ('trying to get a line in the bathroom ... dancing with Molly'), and lewd dancing ('my home girls here with the big butt shaking it like we at a strip club').⁹¹ Cyrus' vocals span an impressive two and a half-octaves, yet many of the short phrases are melodically and rhythmically repetitive. Complexity and simplicity, tropes of adulthood and childhood

⁹¹ Ironically, 'We can't stop' is one of the six songs on *Bangerz* not labelled as 'explicit' on iTunes.

respectively, combine in this recording. The vocal emphasis is rhythmic to fit the bounce nature of this eighty beats per minute (bpm) 'trap' hip-hop-influenced track. Like much of Cyrus' *Hannah Montana* output, the recording of her voice is highly manipulated in terms of pitch, harmony, equalisation, compression and other sonic effects. Cyrus' characterisation of the narrative theme of 'We can't stop' in the accompanying promotional video reveals an uninhibited and unrestrained party girl, yet the highly-processed vocals and the exacting nature of the vocal phrasing of the chorus and other sections, reveals the controlling hand of an external adult agency.

Shawn of its media-baiting promotional video, 'Wrecking Ball' features a challenging and impassioned vocal. The largest consecutive descending interval is a sixth and the overall melodic range an octave and a sixth. Sonic manipulation of the vocals is much less apparent than in 'We can't stop'; despite octave double tracking on the bridges, Cyrus' voice takes on a more organic less-processed feel, in line with the highly emotional and 'adult' content of the lyrics. The song seems to refer to a violently-abusive relationship. Cyrus, as narrator, sings of 'a blazing fall' and a relationship that is now 'ashes on the ground'. Over the slow (sixty bpm) minor key verses, the protagonist sings of a desperate escape ('I can't live a lie, running for my life') as she hits the lowest note in the song (F2). A sudden and extreme upward shift in dynamics into the chorus accompanies a jump of seventeen semitones, and finds Cyrus near the top of her register. Unconstrained from the compositional limitations of her *Hannah Montana* songs, with their deliberately short melodic ranges to encourage audience participation, Cyrus is free from her *Disney* persona to reveal her 'real' self. Her delivery of the climactic line 'you wrecked me' is aurally ambiguous; she could equally be singing 'you *raped* me' which would place the song's narrative, and the (I assume) ironic video treatment into dramatic context. The potent mix of overt female sexuality and destruction in the 'Wrecking Ball' video (Cyrus appears naked astride a demolition ball and, in one scene, licks a sledge hammer) is rooted in folk culture, classical texts and romantic poetry. Whiteley discusses 'violence as spectacle', tracing the blurring of the erotic and the thanatic back to ancient mythology (p. 4). Paglia notes similar impulses in the works of Sade, Shakespeare, pre-Christian tales of Dionysus, and in Freud's Oedipus complex (1992). In stark contrast with the Rousseau-ist construction of

childhood innocence, the knowing combination of orgasmic sexuality and actual destruction in the 'Wrecking Ball' video highlights the primal, naturalistic forces that preceded modern Western notions of childhood as a separate state, whilst cementing Cyrus' transition from child star to adult entertainer.

6.5 Conclusion

Tween recordings bring the traditional concerns of older teens and adults into the realm of children, and contribute to the fluid cultural construction of childhood. They telescope age-defined categories, blur boundaries, promote shared inter-generational consumption, infantilise adult culture and up-age childhood. Much concern has been expressed for the premature sexualisation of young girls for which both tween music (BBC News 2013a; Brzezinski and Noonan in Bernstein, 2013) and the wider media have been blamed. A number of commentators (Dodd 2007; Evans *et al.* 2010; Penny, 2013) see both the commercialisation of the tween market and the attendant displays of sexuality by its stars as empowering for girls and young celebrities. Young stars like Miley Cyrus seem able to resist and subvert dominant media narratives, and, I argue in this paper, her voice has much to do with that subversion. Now 23 with a string of million selling albums (including four number ones before she was sixteen) and an estimated wealth of \$160 million (Miley Cyrus Net Worth 2014), Cyrus has not only transitioned into a credible, if controversial, commercial 'adult' artist, but she seems to be exerting a good deal of agency in the process. Her videos and onstage performances continue to polarise opinions whilst young female ex-*Disney* stars continue to face sustained attention from the popular press. Commenting on the dilemma of tween stars, *Guardian* journalist Hann sees Cyrus' as 'the girl who is sick of being cast as a pure and perfect princess, who wants to have fun and feel powerful' yet acknowledges that she has 'limited options for doing so in a society that remains intolerant of women trying to claim space as anything at all except hot and half-dressed' (2013). In a *Twitter* missive, Ariana Grande quotes Gloria Steinem: 'any woman who chooses to behave like a full human being should be warned that the armies of the status quo will treat her as something of a dirty joke' (New York Magazine 20 Dec 1971, in *Twitter*, 7 June 2015).

Cyrus appears to be consciously resisting and subverting normative notions of young womanhood whilst continuing to attract media attention. She has recently, for example circulated photos of herself wearing a pig mask whilst revealing most of her breasts (Anon 2015b), appeared naked on a magazine cover smeared in mud with an actual pig (Ferrier 2015) and performed onstage with a large prosthetic penis (Strang 2015). Her background in country music (Taylor Swift has a similar background) rather than pure-pop may be a contributing factor to her resilience and career longevity, and may allow her to avoid the 'crash and burn' of many of her ex-*Disney* peers. Country has a lineage of strong, assertive women including Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Tammy Wynette, the Dixie Chicks, and LeAnne Rymes. Growing up near Nashville, surrounded by real-life often-autobiographical songs of abuse, vulnerability, revenge, redemption, and pro-active assertions of gender equality (note Wynette's 1968 hit 'D.I.V.O.R.C.E.' and Lynn's 1975 'The Pill'), Cyrus may have internalised the resilience and personal expressiveness of country.

The gendered construction of childhood innocence ('the myth of innocence'; Giroux 2009, in Lamb, Grayling and Wheeler 2013, p. 167) strips children of agency.

Expressions of sexuality require freedom from the protective measures that inhibit that sexuality. An innocent child is positioned as 'helpless ... deeply vulnerable ... almost completely vacant, without substance of any kind' and is eroticised as such (Kincaid 2010). Adolescent celebrities and ex-child stars have to carefully negotiate the eroticisation and commodification of childhood innocence, and the pornification of popular music culture. Transitioning between the two is often quick, dramatic and fraught with criticism from all sides of the debate. There is little in the way of middle ground; the liminal space between childhood and adulthood is narrow and gendered, policed by the media, and defined by both commercial exploitation, and well-meaning protectionism.

Cyrus seems happy to indulge in the performative (de)construction of gender and blur the polarised notions ingrained in mainstream reports. Her live shows blend exaggerated and sexualised trash-cultural imagery with childhood tropes. Gestures such as flying over the crowd astride a giant hotdog, dry humping a car or performing analingus on a giant teddy bear expose the artifice and rigidity of acceptable female

sexual expression. Such high camp provides a direct challenge to the constructions of gender and childhood, and acceptable displays of female sexuality (Cleto 2000, p. 164), and stands in stark opposition to the more serious eroticism of her peers (Rihanna, Iggy Azalea, Nicki Minaj). As such, Cyrus is subversive.

On stage, her voice, once artificially sweetened through audio processing, is increasingly free to explore more challenging musical material and an increasing depth of pitch (Blistein 2015) that may be linked to her self-identified 'gender fluidity'. Acceptable displays of sexuality in aging musical artists continue to be informed by gender. Male vocalists such as Rod Stewart, Mick Jagger and Tom Jones are mediated as virile in their 60s and 70s whilst aging female artists such as Tina Turner, Madonna, Cher and Britney Spears who foregrounded raunchy sexuality as younger performers, have either retired, toned down their act or continue to face criticism from the press. Recording an album in a widely-recognised retro mainstream genre is now a familiar career strategy for once-edgy artists. While Lady GaGa, Christina Aguilera, Kylie Minogue, Debbie Harry and Annie Lennox (and Rod Stewart, Robbie Williams, Paul McCartney) have turned to swing jazz to revive and sustain their careers, Cyrus' fifth album *Miley Cyrus & Her Dead Petz* (2015) continues the themes of musical experimentation, genre hopping, and explicit sexual references. Former teen-idol and mainstream '60s pop star pin-up Scott Walker⁹² made a successful transition into an avant-garde and experimental musician in the '80s, yet he increasingly shunned public appearance. How long Cyrus can sustain a genre-straddling, media-baiting career based on youth, energy and exuberantly-fluid sexuality depends on how long the press, and the public remain interested as her face, and body age into her voice.

⁹² Coincidentally, Scott Walker also recorded a song called 'Best of both worlds' on his *Scott 2* album (1968).

Chapter Seven

Baby Einstein, Punk Rock Baby and Kidz Bop: The commercialisation of children's music in the twenty-first century

The association of money and childhood is not a comfortable one. Money is something impure.

(Jacqueline Rose, 1984, p. 87).

Commercial forces both shape and reflect childhood. Since the earliest days of the recording industry, musical products have been created with children as a primary market (Bickford, 2014). From around 1905, records to educate and entertain children were being produced alongside toy phonographs (Bickford, 2014). Equally, the production of children's books⁹³ (Hoyles and Evans, 1989), radio shows, films, and television programmes developed soon after the invention of the medium (Kline, 1993, pp. 52-56; Seiter, 1993, pp. 51-55).

The recordings of *Folkways*, BBC radio shows such as *Children's Choice*, and TV shows such as *Bagpuss*, *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show* and *Hannah Montana* are all industrial products that have contributed to the construction of childhood. However, during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the market for pre-schoolers and even pre-natal children has expanded rapidly. Many of these products bear the hallmarks of adults' investment in the myth of childhood innocence, and are burdened by nostalgia. Commercial forces have simultaneously stratified age-targeted marketing categories for young children, whilst conflating the age demographics of older children, teens and adults. The previous chapter noted how in tween, traditional tropes of adulthood such as erotic sexuality, violence and money are increasingly penetrating the walled garden of childhood, transforming it in the process. Childhood innocence, it seems, has been sullied by raunch culture and the corporate pursuit of the \$600 billion accessible by children's

⁹³ The first picture book for children appeared in 1657, an adaptation of Aesop's Fables in 1692 and the first book of English nursery rhymes in 1744 (Hoyles and Evans, 1989).

pester power⁹⁴ (Linn, 2008, p. 1). Simultaneously, naturalised characteristics of childhood such as innocence, naivety, spontaneity, pleasure, play, and instant gratification are proving increasingly attractive to adults, forging new intergenerational identities. This 'age compression' has produced 'kidults'; adults who increasingly consume the same films, television programmes, computer games, music, clothing, comics and gadgets as children. The issues raised by cultural infantilisation are the main focus of chapter eight.

This chapter examines the rapid growth of the children's music and culture market, the increasing concerns about the impact of rampant commercialisation on childhood, and the perceived deleterious effects on children's lives. Concerns are weighed against the claimed positive benefits, such as education, entertainment, identity formation, and protection. Secondly, I discuss how music traditionally associated with adults has been down-aged to appeal to children. I examine musical products designed for the pre-school market of babies and toddlers by focusing on a range of specially-created punk, rock, and metal albums. Subsequently, I examine the 'Mozart Effect' and the specious educational claims made by manufacturers of the Disney-owned *Baby Einstein*, and *The Mozart Effect* (now a trademarked phrase⁹⁵) ranges. I use the word 'kiddified' to describe how music produced for the consumption of toddlers, babies and fetuses is often a simpler, lesser and diminished version of its adult equivalent, stripped of its supposed adult essence. Such manipulation reveals adults' views of children as lacking, deficient, 'less than' and 'other'. Kiddified children's music perpetuates the construction of childhood as a mythologised separate space and encultures children to internalise this difference of status, thus keeping them in a state of childhood. Finally, following the discussions of tween in the last chapter, I look at how many of the adult tropes of chart pop are effaced in the creation of 'suitable' products for pre-teens. I use musical analysis to highlight the simplification process involved in the production of albums such as *Kidz Bop* (Razor and Tie/RCA) and *Pop Jr* (Universal Music TV), and in

⁹⁴ The 'nag factor' influences 46% of all adult purchases (Linn, 2008, p. 34).

⁹⁵ 'The Mozart Effect' is an inclusive term signifying the transformational powers of music in health, education and well-being. Written and developed by Don Campbell, The Mozart Effect® series of books and recordings uses music as a powerful catalyst for healing, creativity and development.' (The Mozart Effect Resource Centre, 2016).

the media-straddling Australian band The Wiggles. I discuss how these products uphold traditional notions of childhood innocence and serve to sustain childhood as a protected idyll.

7.1 The commercialisation of children's music

The digital revolution has swiftly increased children's participation in commercial markets whilst facilitating enhanced opportunities for businesses to advertise and sell to children. This fast-evolving relationship between children and big business has changed childhood in the twenty-first century. Digital developments such as wikis, blogs and user-generated content have allowed children to actively participate in this ongoing construction. In a post-modern, late-capitalist society, the consumption of signs and symbols, in the form of branded products has largely replaced real material needs. Children are at the commercial, technological and social nexus forged by targeted brand-driven marketing, sophisticated online social networks, peer pressure, and their fast-developing emotional fluency. Such a position, it is argued, empowers children, provides them with greater social visibility, and, perhaps most crucially, helps form their identities both as individuals and as a socio-political category (Buckingham, 2000). Whilst historically, children have not been a significant economic class in terms of ownership of capital, in the digital age, they have increasing social status. To a large extent, modern children's culture is a closed shop for adults. The latest child-focused social media platforms, gaming apps and YouTube phenomena are in many ways unfathomable for an older pre-digital generation of parents. It is this deliberate age-discrimination by culture producers and children's complicit engagement with the products that differentiates them as consumers whilst defining their identity. Bourdieu discusses how intellectual and cultural capital create distinctions between social groups, whilst being embedded within system of economic capital. Bocock explains how 'consumption ... can be seen as a set of social and cultural practices which serve as a way of establishing differences between social groups, not merely as a way of expressing differences which are already in place' (1993, pp. 62-64). Kline concurs,

suggesting that 'the marketing of children's culture is not simply an economic impetus of capitalism, but a cultural activity that helps to shape the way children engage, play and are socialized as well as how they are perceived by other institutions' (1995, p. 350).

The increasing ubiquity of consumerism in children's lives is evidenced by the reach of digital technology and its attendant symbolic value. Empowering rhetoric concerning the formation of children's identities and their enhanced social status through participation in consumerism is balanced by increasing concerns about their physical and mental health. Views of children that pitch freedom against protection draw on essentialist views of childhood. My investigation reveals the many ways in which the lines between childhood and adulthood have become blurred, whilst acknowledging the instances where the differentiation has become more obvious.

The children's market in the U.K. is worth over £99 billion and has grown rapidly in the early twenty-first century (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 16). Globally, children spend over £12 billion of their own money each year (*ibid*, p. xviii) and influence a further £410 billion a year of spending through 'pester power' (Linn, 2005 p. 1). £440 million of children's money is spent on music (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 4). As media platforms evolve, companies have developed increasingly-sophisticated child-focused marketing campaigns. The average under eleven-year-old watches 25,600 television adverts a year, while 87% of the most popular children's websites carry some form of advertising (Moses, 2014). Children now spend an average of three hours a day on the internet, up 50% from 2014 to 2015; television viewing and book reading have both declined (Jackson, 2016). On average, British children get their first mobile phone at seven and a half years old (Cable, 2013). The streaming of music has rapidly overtaken the downloading of mp3s, and the purchase of records, CDs and other physical formats. Children use YouTube as a free programmable jukebox; fifty-eight percent of children who access YouTube do so to watch music videos (Jackson, 2016). Spotify's freemium model allows children⁹⁶ free

⁹⁶ In 2015, 21% of American *Spotify* users (Statista, 2016a) and 11% of *Pandora*'s clientele were children (Emarketer, 2015).

access to the streaming service. However, both YouTube and the free version of Spotify carry advertising either layered onto the product (YouTube), between the songs (Spotify) or surrounding the song, playlist or video, as part of the site's design. Ever-evolving links between social media platforms means that adverts are targeted by the user's age, gender, location and their history of online searches and purchases.⁹⁷ Studies show that young children cannot differentiate between adverts and programmes on TV (Linn, 2005, p. 2). Older children and teens have the same trouble on the internet (Mayo and Nairn 2009, p. 134). However, in a world where children are exposed to 360-degree marketing (Mayo and Nairn 2009, p. 49), the dividing line between advert and product is often blurred. The extensive cross-product licensing of recent Disney films such as *Frozen* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Garrahan, 2015), and the connections of the *Teletubbies* with fast-food outlets (Linn, 2005, p. 7) are exemplars of how the product and the advert fuse. Companies place their products and construct their stores⁹⁸ in virtual role-playing games such as *Minecraft*, *EverQuest*, and *SecondLife* (Lindstrom 2004) whilst 'advergames' and 'shoppertainment' (Linn, 2005, p. 45) ensure the 'wholesale infiltration of every technology platform by powerful commercial forces' (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 119). Historically, the advertising of children's products was targeted at parents and other adult gatekeepers. Increasingly, ads are aimed directly at the child using branding to communicate emotionally, and non-verbally. Children also market to other children online. Around 500,000 children in the U.K. have been signed up by youth-oriented companies as 'customer advocates' and 'lifestyle reps' (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 29 and p. 37). Adults pose as children in 'chatrooms' and online fora to generate a 'buzz' and raise brand awareness using children's social networks (Linn, 2005, p. 6).

Concerns about the impact of increased marketing to children are highlighted in the titles of the many books on the subject. Linn's *Consuming Kids: Protecting Our Children from the Onslaught of Marketing and Advertising* (2005), Mayo and Nairn's *Consumer Kids: How big business is grooming our children for profit* (2009), Barber's

⁹⁷ Studies have shown that many children lie about their age online making themselves appear much older (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 37).

⁹⁸ Children can work in these virtual stores (Lindstrom, 2004).

Consumed: How markets corrupt children, infantilize adults and swallow citizens whole (2007), and Palmer's *Toxic childhood: How the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it* (2006) outline the many of the tactics used by big business to sell to children. They detail the concerns about the impact of 'corporate America's use and abuse of children and their families' (Linn, 2005, p. ix) whilst offering solutions to 'detoxify' childhood. Central to these concerns is the deliberate individuation of children as consumers. Barber describes 'the private chooser', a child who through the illusion of choice, and 'the dynamics of consumption' is rendered vulnerable to corporate manipulation (2007, p. 36). He highlights how consumption patterns have changed as a result of market segmentation from fulfilling the needs of the family to individuated purchases (*ibid*, p. 31). 'The child embedded in a family community' states Barber 'makes a poor shopper – a disempowered consumer forced to bow to 'gatekeepers' like Mom and Dad' (*ibid*). Gunter and Furnham detail how children come to understand money, advertising, and the commercial world that increasingly surrounds and defines them by building their 'consumer literacy'. They stress that 'socialisation' into the marketplace is affected by peers, the media, and parents and other family members (1998, pp. 9-10). They note how parents in particular are able to modify the effects of advertising on children stating that 'the family seems to be important in teaching adolescents 'rational' aspects of consumerism' (1998, p. 17). Individuated child consumers outside of parental control and guidance are less able to rationalise the marketing that is targeted at them. Linn discusses atomised consumption (2005, p. x) and the creation of niche marketing categories based on age and gender. She discusses how extreme market segmentation is based in part on Piaget's work on developmental psychology, Kohlberg's concepts of moral development and Erikson's maturational milestones (Linn, 2005, p. 24). Once stratified and atomised, the child consumer is vulnerable to savvy marketers who play on ideas of 'cool' (Barber, 2007, p. 19; Cross, 1999, pp. 85-88) by deliberately targeting slightly older products to slightly younger children.⁹⁹ Such strategies are effective in exposing children to ideas and images that may be inappropriate for their age and mental

⁹⁹ Seventy percent of the websites most popular with children are intended for adult users (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, pp. 136-137).

development. Inadequate regulation of online advertisement and 'new consumer culture' (Schor, 2004) has led to a slew of concerns for its effect on children's mental and physical health (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 219).

Firstly, the increased focus on materialism has led to higher levels of insecurity (Bee-Gates, 2006), anxiety and depression (Schor, 2004, p. 17) in children. The instant gratification offered by online consumption is decreasing levels of childhood happiness (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. xviii) and self-worth (Linn, 2005, p. 8; Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 213 and p. 219). Secondly, levels of ADD (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 122; Schor, 2004, p. 13), self-harm, body image issues, obesity, and addictions to electronic games and phone apps (Schor, 2004, p. 17) have increased in the digital age. 'Nature deficit disorder' has resulted from children's increased separation from the world of trees, fields and rivers (Louv, 2005). Thirdly, tween branding and the upaging of childhood has brought sexualised products such as the Bratz dolls, and raunchy tween performers such as Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber to an increasingly younger audience. The commercialisation of childhood has, it seems, exaggerated gender stereotypes. Walter notes how 'Medieval' values have trumped more enlightened gender expectations. Boys' toys promote fighting, and an aggressive superhero agenda, whilst those for girls foster 'goodness', shyness and a demure princess aesthetic (Walter, 2010, pp. 130-132). Linn's solution is unequivocal. She states bluntly 'let's stop marketing to children. It's not just that our kids are consuming. They are being consumed'. (2005, p. 219). Yet some authors see consumer culture as an inevitable part of everyday life (Seiter, 1993, p. 228) and are keen to stress the benefits of the integration of children into the digital marketplace. The internet it seems has increased the generation gap and in many ways empowered children. Youngsters, it appears, are now outstripping adults in terms of their digital media expertise (Buckingham, 2000, p. 5). Digital natives (children born in the internet age) as young as six are better able to manipulate online apps and mobile devices than adults aged 45 to 49 (Garside, 2014). Buckingham claims that the democratic, diverse and participatory nature of the internet and other digital media 'engender[s] new forms of consciousness among

young people that takes them beyond the restricted imaginations of their parents and teachers' (2000, p. 42).

The moral panic around the commercialisation and digitisation of childhood echoes similar concerns raised by the rise of mass culture and advertising in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Frankfurt School academics painted the recipients of mass cultural as passive victims with 'false needs' who are easily duped by influential corporations, whilst Packard's book 'The hidden persuaders' (1957) detailed the manipulative strategies of advertisers. In the context of childhood, such attitudes perpetuate notions of innocence, naivety, neediness and helplessness. Children are seen as lacking the ability to resist the seduction of advertising messages. They are seen as incompetent and vulnerable to persuasion. However, Buckingham points out that young children often forget or misunderstand adverts, and that other sources of information such as their parents and their peers have more influence over their consumption behaviour (2004, pp. 150-151). He suggests that studies seeking to find a direct causal link between children's exposure to advertising and an increase in their levels of consumerism are less than conclusive (Buckingham, 2004, p. 151). By around seven years old, it appears that children have developed 'cognitive defences' to resist advertiser's intentions, although this finding showed class differences (Buckingham, 2004, p. 153). Recent commentary attributes agency to young consumers who are able to make active choices, gain 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), and build social identities through their consumption choices (Kehily and Swann, 2003, p. 282). Furthermore, the digitisation of children's culture has allowed children themselves to earn money online through trading, collecting and other creative entrepreneurial activities (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 242 and p. 286; Seiter, 1993, pp. 3-4).

It must be stressed that although global marketing by giant corporations such as Disney has a tendency to produce standard models of childhood consumption, more than half of the world does not have access to the internet¹⁰⁰ (Internet World Stats, 2015). Furthermore, Western childhood and the effects of over-consumption

¹⁰⁰ Africa has the lowest percentage of internet users (28.6% of the population) whilst in Europe and Australia, over a quarter of the population has no internet (*Internet World Stats*, 2015).

(childhood obesity, nature deficit disorder, anxiety over materialism) are only possible due to the labours of children working in China, India, Indonesia, and Taiwan (Kehily and Swann, 2003). Ellen Seiter concurs that it is 'a middle class delusion ... that children can be shielded from consumption' (1993, p. 3) and a 'mistake to see marketers as evil brain washers and children as naïve innocents' (*ibid*, p. 9). She cautions children's gatekeepers to 'resist mass culture when it is bad' and to be wary of 'spurious "quality" educational materials' whilst being 'vigilant about the dominance of middle-class culture' (*ibid*, p. 234).

The next section shifts the focus from children and teens as consumers and target audiences to parents and to some of the 'spurious "quality" educational' commercial musical products aimed at them to ironically assuage many of the concerns thrown up by increased commercialisation of childhood. Parental fears concerning falling literacy rates in children and a desire to accelerate childhood learning have been exploited by the dubious and unproven educational claims of children's music producers.

7.2 *Baby Einstein* and the 'Mozart Effect': Kiddification, age-separation and faux-education through musical simplification

Studies of the 'Mozart Effect' for children vary in their support for the beneficial effects of music on a range of skills and cognitive abilities. Proponents claim that classical music and, more specifically, the music of Mozart stimulates brain growth, aids fine motor skills, language learning, and social skills, reduces levels of stress, whilst developing emotions and attitudes in pre-natal babies (Campbell, 2000).

A recent study on adults has suggested that Mozart's *Sonata for Two Pianos K448* 'is able to "activate" neuronal cortical circuits related to attentive and cognitive functions' (Verrusio *et al*, 2015). The authors claim that the frequent melodic repetition in K448 and Mozart's music in general offers few 'surprises' that might distract the listener. They suggest that 'each element of harmonic (and melodic) tension finds a resolution that confirms listeners' expectations'. Others disagree

suggesting that different genres of music and even story narrations similarly arouse the listener, and have a positive short-term effect on spatial-temporal awareness (Nantais and Schellenberg, 1999; Thompson, Schellenberg and Husain, 2001). Further studies have failed to find any benefits (Steele, Bass and Crook, 1999). The original studies analysed the effects of listening to Mozart's K448 on a group of 36 university students (Rauscher, Shaw and Ky, 1993 and 1995) yet the 'Mozart Effect' phenomenon is largely associated with the benefits it brings to children. Beauvais offers a sociological overview of the 'scientific legend' of how Mozart's music came to be associated with child giftedness (2015). She highlights a confluence of contributing elements which include developments in neuroscience and their influence on educational policy, and practice. The 'Mozart Effect', she argues, was bolstered by 'the mystique of 'high art' (p. 185), and parental investment in a 'quick-fix' solution to increase their children's intelligence.

Commercial products proliferated in the late 1990s and early 2000s. *The Mozart Effect* website produced by Don Campbell (The Mozart Effect Resource Centre, 2016) displays an invitation to 'discover the transformational powers of music for health, education and well-being'. The site sells a range of music themed by age (Mozart for foetuses, newborns, and toddlers), gender (specific Mozart products for dads and mums), and activity (Mozart for healing, sleeping, relaxing, travelling, and 'brain tuning'). Campbell's book *The Mozart Effect for children* (2000; the book for adults was written three years before) makes bold claims for 'the highly efficient effects of Mozart's music' (p. 11) which include altering the structure of the foetal brain (p. 3), growing the brain in the womb (p. 8), relieving stress, improving motor skills (p. 3), improving 'emotional perceptions ... and expression', 'attitudes from prebirth onwards', language, creativity, social abilities, reading, writing, and math, (p. 8) all derived from passive listening to Mozart's music. Descriptions of the specific beneficial musical and sonic elements of Mozart's music are vague; Campbell talks of how 'the rhythms, melodies, and high frequencies of Mozart's music stimulate and charge the creative and motivational regions of the brain' and how Mozart's music is 'deeply mysterious and accessible' (p. 13). Most interestingly, Campbell states that 'perhaps the key to Mozart's greatness is that it all sounds so

pure and simple ... the wit, charm, and simplicity of his compositions allow us to locate a profound joy, and a deeper wisdom, in ourselves' (p. 13). It is this naturalised association of children with purity, simplicity and the ability to charm that reveals Campbell's protectionist ideological, one that he is happy to commercialise for a market of receptive and competitive parents. Unsurprisingly, the compositions included on Campbell's CDs are recorded with 'simplified' instrumentation. For example, *Music for Children, Volume 1: Tune Up Your Mind* features Mozart's 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik KV. 525 - IV. Rondo: Allegro'. The high tempo and complex string arrangement for violin, viola and cello of the original are replaced by a single accordion part and a top-line flute melody. The key change in the original is absent in the version for children. This 'lessening' is located in many of the other CDs mentioned in this section and it is perhaps the main attribute that differentiates music for children from that of adults. As stressed throughout this thesis, children's music teaches children how to be children. Forming the essence of the concept of Western childhood since its conception, the prototypical categorisation of childhood as a simplified version of adulthood has led to typicality in subsequent industrial-cultural products (Rosch, 1986). The 'cheapness' of children's music (two session players cost less than an orchestra; computer-based midi productions less still) perpetuates this diminished aesthetic.

Despite there being no evidence that children under two can learn from visual and auditory media (Clark, 2007, p. 246), pseudo-educational products proliferated following reports of 'Mozart Effect'. *Disney's Baby Einstein* range is a series of videos that includes the music-related *Baby Bach*, *Baby Vivaldi*, *Baby Beethoven*, as well as others based on literature, science, astronomy and art, such as *Baby Shakespeare*, *Baby Newton*, *Baby Van Gogh* and *Baby Galileo*. (Linn, 2005, p. 53; Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 14). Once again, the product range is billed as educational (the web site mentions 'learning pillars'; Kidsii, 2016) whilst more-subtle cues encourage adults to purchase products that will enhance this education. The main strap line mentions 'a simple and universal idea' which is 'the curiosity of young children, and the wish of parents everywhere to nourish it'. The music used throughout the series (the music of *Baby Bach* and the other composers is recycled

in the science, art and literature videos) is highly typical of music for young children. The midi-produced compositions are simplified, stripped-down versions of the originals. Top line, melodies are often carried by bells, glockenspiels, xylophones and other high-pitched sounds. Synth pads are smooth and soporific. Novelty sounds such as squelches, chicken voices and 'boings' are also featured. The production values of the music and the accompanying visuals are 'cheap' and basic. Other simplified and 'educational' musical products include the *Brainy Baby* (The Brainy Store, 2016) and *Baby Genius* ('entertaining and enriching toddler with content and products "with a purpose"'; Genius Brands International, Inc., 2016). The singing voices on the CDs and DVDs are 'polite', highly-enunciated and predominantly female. Lyrical themes tend to focus on education (counting, alphabet, colours), activity (songs with actions) or sleeping (lullabies). Similarly, Neurosmith's Sunshine Symphony is a soft toy that 'develops attention and focus using classical music to stimulate your little one's senses and teaches cause and effect' (Clark, 2007, p. 245). The flower-shaped toy plays kiddified versions of Mozart's 'Piano Sonata in C Major', Handel's 'Water Music', Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* when squeezed by babies. Established brands such as *Sesame Street* and *Winnie the Pooh* have expanded their product ranges in an attempt to exploit the toddler and baby market (Linn, 2005, p. 55). Politicians were not immune to the power of the 'Mozart Effect'. In 1998, all school children and new mothers in Georgia, U.S.A. were issued with a classical compilation CD entitled *Build Your Baby's Brain Through the Power of Music* (Nantais and Schellenberg, 1999).

The 'consumerist fantasy' (Beauvais, 2015, p. 196) of educational, brain-building, intelligence-enhancing media for babies and toddlers, as exemplified by the 'Mozart Effect' is 'surrounded, both as a scientific phenomenon and as a commercial enterprise, by a ritualistic mystique which contributed to its success by cultivating magical thinking around it' (p. 197). More worryingly, it plays on parental insecurities and competitiveness, whilst perpetuating ideas of children as simple, and deserving of aurally-diminished musical products. Set against a backdrop of

increased testing of children's academic achievement and the commercialisation of schooling, the success of pseudo-educational musical media becomes clearer.

Adult nostalgia has informed the *Intelikids* range of 'Baby Style' albums. Buyers can choose from lullaby versions of 'greatest hits' packages by artists such as U2, Abba, The Beatles, and Queen, aimed at babies ages 0 to 18 months.¹⁰¹ The liner notes of the 'Rolling Stones Baby Style' album (2006, Sum Records) boast how:

Music can help create peace and harmony for the child and the mother, even from pregnancy. Studies show that music affects the brain and improves different skills in babies, children and adults. The music not only activates neural networks, but also affects concentration, attention and memory, fundamentals for the learning process. Thus, not only is their auditory perception stimulated, but it contributes to their mental and emotional development.

(liner notes to 'Rolling Stones Baby Style' album, 2006, Sum Records)

The fourteen songs feature soporific, down-tempo arrangements performed on a keyboard. The top-line melodies are stripped to one simple electric piano part, with chords provided by a basic synthesised pad. Bass, drums, guitars and vocals are absent. Production values are extremely basic; the songs sound like a keyboard student is playing them from a score book at half of the original tempi. The function of the songs seems to be to provide womb-like sounds to help babies sleep, yet the blurb chooses to highlight wider educational benefits. The simplicity of the arrangements echoes the oft-repeated assumptions about the simplicity of children and the innocence of childhood. Lyrics about heroin and abusive slave owners ('Brown Sugar'), sexual frustration ('Satisfaction') and a 'jaded, faded junkie nurse' ('You can't always get what you want') have been effaced, replaced by a monotonous music-box twinkle, the ultimate aural signifier of childhood innocence. The over-riding motivator for the production and consumption of this album is adult nostalgia for the theoretical innocence of children (Nodelman, 1985). Offering a lesser, more basic, and diminished product perpetuates adult notions of children's lack of complexity, their limitations and their 'dumbness'. It suggests that young

¹⁰¹ The range also includes albums made for children in the womb.

children would not enjoy, or even tolerate the rhythms and melodies of the originals, let alone have their neural networks activated by the full-fat adult versions. As Nodelman repeatedly points out, such products contribute to ‘a construction of childhood designed to please widely-shared ideals of what children and childhood ought to be’ (2004, p. 150). Ironically, nostalgic adult consumers of *Rolling Stones Baby Style* can sing along to the version of ‘Wild Horses’ (track 2), the original lyrics: ‘Childhood living is easy to do. The things that you wanted, I bought them for you’. Adorno suggested that ‘by scaling down large works, they negate the totality’ (1938). For him, complexity, delayed gratification and variety fostered a mature adult mode of listening. *Rolling Stones Baby Style* is the polar opposite and of the music sampled in this thesis, it ranks among the texts with the highest levels of childness.

The influence of adult nostalgia on children’s musical culture is exemplified by ex-punk Ian Walker who set up a record label called ‘Punk Rock Baby’ specialising in instrumental lullaby versions of punk classics with the intention of creating a new generation of fully-fledged punk rockers (Simpson, 2002; Paphides, 2002). Walker was concerned that modern pop music (he singles out the *Popstars* TV franchise and The Spice Girls) is ‘destructive’ and ‘rob[s] children of their childhood’. His stated aims are to ‘engender a bit of taste’ (Petridis, 2005) and to get children to experience some of the ‘alternative cultural upheaval’ of the original punk explosion (Paphides, 2002). He hopes that through exposure to the melodies of songs by The Clash, The Ramones, etc. babies will be more attuned to ‘the real thing’ when they are older. Despite his educational intentions being predominantly musical, Walker’s productions bear all the traditional hallmarks of childhood listed above; low production values and musical simplification abound. Unfortunately, Walker’s goal of breeding a new generation of rebellious punks may be thwarted by a study that shows that young children perceive down-tempo music as being sad, independent of the key or other melodic and harmonic factors (Mote, 2011). Ironically, the

original unadulterated up-tempo ‘adult’ versions¹⁰² seem more suited to achieving his desired cultural revolution.

7.3 Kidz Bop: Making songs safe for children

The issues of protection, safety and childhood innocence raised by tween music are apparent in a range of popular twenty-first century children’s music products. One of the most commercially successful is the *Kidz Bop*¹⁰³ (Razor and Tie/RCA) range of compilation albums and accompanying videos which feature children (aged between thirteen and seventeen) singing kiddified versions of contemporary pop songs. The lyrics of the original songs are adapted to remove any explicit references to sex, swearing and other content deemed inappropriate by the producers. However, Bickford points out that making the songs ‘safe’ for the *Kidz Bop* audience involves ‘surface-level packaging and framing’ in the videos ‘more than substantive changes to the content of songs’ (2012, p. 420). Similar to the children’s folk music, music hall songs and many other recordings examined throughout this thesis, *Kidz Bop* blends tropes of adulthood (nightclubs, tame but sexualised dance moves) with those of childhood (bright colours, soft toys, singing in bedrooms, anthropomorphised animals). The popularity of *Kidz Bop* demonstrates the changing attitudes to children. The 1983 British TV show *Minipops* also featured children (often pre-teens) singing contemporary chart pop songs. The show was cancelled after one series following media criticisms which focused on the supposedly-inappropriate nature of the subtext of the original material and the female performers dressing, and dancing like their adult equivalents. An article on *Minipops* from *The Observer* (27 February 1983) reads like the Victorian opprobrium of music hall performers, offering a surface-level condemnation, whilst fetishising

¹⁰² The simplicity of the chord patterns, rhythms and structures of songs by The Ramones, The Clash, The Buzzcocks and other punk bands allowed amateur musicians and singers (including many children, such as Ari Up, Annabella Lwin, as discussed in the previous chapter, or the members of Eater) to participate.

¹⁰³ The thirty-one *Kidz Bop* albums released to date have sold a combined sixteen million units. The compilations regularly make the Billboard Top 10 and are frequently among the best selling albums of the year for any genre (Bickford, 2012, p. 419).

the show with highly descriptive and sexualised comments. Bickford suggests a solution to the problem of cross-generational culture and the adult interpretations that shape the aesthetics, stating that ‘music for kids would not be so much a categorical distinction from music for adults, but simply one point along a spectrum of appropriateness on which the same song might be available to children or adults’ (2012, p. 422). Similarly, *Kids Pop Party* (2007, Exceed) features rerecorded versions of hits deemed suitable for children. Although the recordings are delivered by a studio band (The Top of the Poppers), and some effort is made to replicate the originals by E.L.O., Abba, Kim Wilde, and Bucks Fizz, the economic limitations of the production render the songs a diminished version of their adult equivalents. The appropriateness of thematic context is clearly subjective; ‘Melting pot’ feels like a clumsy and archaic anti-diversity handling of race issues (the opposite sentiment is contained in ‘Ebony and Ivory’ also featured on the album); ‘Kids in America’ touches on erotic love (‘come closer, honey, that’s better ... don’t try to stop baby hold me tight’); ‘Ain’t no pleasing you’ is an angry, end-of-relationship missive, whilst other songs such as ‘January February’, ‘Beg, steal or borrow’ and ‘Angelo’ (all from the 1970s) seem just too era-specific and middle-of-the-road to appeal to twenty-first century children or their adult purse holders. Also of note is the *Pop Jr* (Universal Music TV) range of CDs and DVDs, which compile original recordings from a wide range of sources. Like *Kids Pop Party*, the kiddification of *Pop Jr* has been achieved through song selection rather than adjustments to the lyrics.¹⁰⁴ The selection of songs highlights the underling tropes of the vast majority of children’s music. Nostalgia, education, and commercialised entertainment are central to the eclectic selection. Animal themes (‘The lion sleeps tonight’, ‘Who let the dogs out’, ‘The duck song’, ‘Big Fish Little Fish’) seem the only commonality to the disparate genres and decades. TV themes (including many from BBC’s *CBeebies* - Postman Pat, Mr Maker, Noddy), film songs (*The Lion King*’s ‘Can you feel the love tonight’) and product-based songs such as ‘The Gummy Bear song’ and ‘Moshi Monsters’, reveal the commercial links between media platforms, the increasing cross-licensing of adult songs into the children’s market, and the rise of ‘advertainment’ for children.

¹⁰⁴ Although it is the ‘clean edit’ of Jessie J’s ‘Price Tag’ that is featured on the CD and DVD.

Product and promotion are indivisible. Grown-up sentiments of courtship and adult relationships¹⁰⁵ rub shoulders with the most simplified lyrics¹⁰⁶ on *Pop Jr*. The music industry has traditionally based its business model on revenue derived from recorded products. With digitisation, sales of physical products (most notably the CD) have fallen dramatically. As a result, record companies and publishers have sought new markets to exploit. The success of *Kidz Bop* and *Pop Jr* has been driven by the rights holders of the 'adult' songs who increasingly see any licensing opportunity as a way to replace some of this lost revenue.

Straddling the overtly educational intentions of the 'Mozart Effect' products and the entertainment focus of *Kidz Bop*, The Wiggles exemplify the commercial potential of the new children's market. Rooted in music, recordings and live shows, the four-piece band has utilised a range of 'convergent media' such as TV, theatre, animation, computer games, and merchandising to become Australia's second most successful performing act¹⁰⁷ (Giuffre, 2013, p. 145). The Wiggles formed after members had studied early childhood education degrees, and despite the band's obvious commercial success, scholars tend to focus on the didactic and instructional aspects of the band, rather than on their roles as songwriters, performers, musicians, marketers and creators of a wide range of media (Dunn, 2001; McDermott and Lowe, 2003 in Giuffre, 2013, p. 146). As discussed in the introductory chapter, issues of didacticism, instruction, and the dissemination of morality, and cultural values dominate discussions of children's culture, specifically in the areas of literature and television where children's media scholarship is most advanced. My examination of *Baby Einstein* and *The Mozart Effect* products above shows how even the most tentative nods to educational value can be marketed and commercialised as children's products. The Wiggles further exemplify this link. In her discussion of the band, Giuffre notes how 'the provision of a child's education and well-being may be a more persuasive sales tool than merely enjoyment' (2013, p. 146). This broader consideration of The Wiggles reveals how education and

¹⁰⁵ Such as Carly Rae Jepsen's 'Call me maybe' which contains the lines 'Your stare was holdin'. Ripped jeans. Skin was showin'. Hot night. Wind was blowin'. Where you think you're going, baby?'.

¹⁰⁶ Such as 'I am a shape' from CBeebies' *Mr. Maker* which apart from the title only contains the words 'I am a circle. I am a triangle. I am a square. I am a rectangle'.

¹⁰⁷ Cox suggests that only AC/DC are bigger than the Wiggles (in Giuffre, 2013, p. 145)

entertainment can be packaged using tropes of both childhood¹⁰⁸ (bright colours, animation, perma-smiles, costumed characters) and adulthood¹⁰⁹ to create a carefully-branded, commercially-successful, cross-media children's musical product. Their versions of Toots and the Maytals' 'Monkey Man' with Kylie Minogue, or Split Enz's 'Six months in a leaky boat' with Tim Finn suggest that, like *Kidz Bop*, *Pop Jr* and *Kids Pop Party*, with careful selection, minor aesthetic adjustments, and the eradication of the most obviously-inappropriate content, adult music can serve as entertainment for children.

The next chapter explores a contrasting, yet related, phenomenon whereby adults are increasingly turning to children and childhood for their cues on cultural expression. The three musical manifestations serve to highlight the pleasures of nostalgia, the comforting attraction of childhood and the wider infantilisation of adult society.

7.4 Conclusion

The inclusion of babies and toddlers in the children's music market affords them a special status that, on modern scales of economy, they never had before. This specialness separates them not only from adults, but from the slightly older children who have now been categorised as a separate marketing category, in this case tween. As markets become increasingly segmented and stratified, consumers (of all ages) become atomised and individuated, defined increasingly by their power as consumers rather than the traditional discourses of childhood outlined in the introduction.

In my definition of the 'music hall formula', I discussed how adult lyrical content is cloaked, its 'true' meaning only revealed by competent readers. Although the texts themselves distort and potentially limit the number and scope of interpretations and may diminish children's agency, such a gesture, I argue, empowers children by

¹⁰⁸ Giuffre's descriptions of The Wiggles' music are included as part of my discussion on the musical tropes of childhood in chapter one.

¹⁰⁹ Like the human guests on *The Muppet Show*, The Wiggles have recorded with scores of adults including Kylie Minogue, John Fogerty, Tim Finn, Leo Sayer, Rolf Harris and Keith Urban.

at least giving them multi-layered text that both they, and the adults in their lives can unpick, discuss, enjoy and generally grow from. I discussed the wide age range of readerships implied by *Children's Choice* which broadcast many age-nonspecific recordings, and *The Muppet Show* which recirculated similarly adult-derived songs to children. The successful transmission and persistence of the songs as 'children's music' relied largely on the childness of the music factors (evidenced by CMQ analysis). The 'real life' themes were something of a bonus to reward children whose level of competence (childness) allowed them to unleash the full potential of the song, and a mechanism by which the songs could 'grow' with the child as they developed in competence through experience, aging, discussion and reflection, something the fictional Holden Caulfield's museum exhibits could not. Any move to constrain the text in response to constructed notions of childhood innocence and its protection limits the implied reader's ability to derive multiple meanings from that text. The case studies in this chapter frame such limitations in different ways. The 'Mozart Effect' products remove much of the instrumentation of the original conceptions; the loss of texture, timbre, dynamics and other musical and sonic factors stifles more competent and nuanced readings of the texts. *Punk Rock Baby* makes adults' protection of children explicit by removing any potentially-offending words by completely removing the vocals and defacing the harmonic support to produce songs that elicit a merely functional reading (music to fall asleep to). The *Kidz Bop* albums and their ilk are exemplars of the age stratification of children's musical products. Since its inception in the UK in 1952, or the Billboard Hot 100 in 1958, chart music has historically has been aimed at teens *and* tweens *and* adults *and* children. The creation of separate age-related categories and products for such music based on the musical and lyrical effacement of the original signifiers of adulthood reveals the protectionist tendencies that continue to inform childhood. Such gestures produce 'closed' texts that further limit children's ability to exert agency and engage meaningfully with the 'grown up' world around them. As stressed throughout, this disconnect, in which children's real lives in all their complexity are not represented in the songs created for them is evidence of the influence of 'childhood', the distorting lens through which adults' control over children is expressed.

The next chapter examines how this power relationship is potentially inverted, and how tropes of different discourses of childhood have imbued adult culture with high levels of childness. However, an examination of the infantilisation of society reveals the influence of nostalgia and its power in informing twenty-first century adulthood with notions of childhood that, by definition, have always been defined by adults.

Chapter Eight

Kindie Rock, Baby Metal and vocaloids: The soundtrack to infantilisation

Not since the middle ages have children known so much about adult life as now.

(Neil Postman, 1994, p. 97)

Whilst children's music consumption is increasingly defined by rapidly-shrinking and ever-more rigid age, gender and activity categories (music for girl babies, music for boy toddlers, music for six year-olds on a car journey, etc.), post-tween consumerism is being transformed. Age categories and the products that served them have roughly held since the rise of teenage culture in the mid-1950s.¹¹⁰ In the last two decades, long-held constructions of childhood (and thus adulthood) have changed. In the face of digitisation, globalisation, rampant consumer capitalism and rapid social change, discourses that have sought to define childhood as a separate entity from adulthood have crumbled. That childhood in the twenty-first century has adopted many of the traits traditionally associated with adulthood is perhaps not surprising considering the rise of tween culture and its appropriation of adult pop cultural signifiers, especially sexuality, for children's consumption. Concerns about the potentially-damaging effects of children's enculturation as consumers (Barber, 2007; Bee-Gates, 2006; Buckingham, 2000, pp. 145-167; Kline, 1995; Linn, 2005; Mayo and Nairn, 2009; Palmer, 2006; Schor, 2004; Walter, 2010) are echoed in equally-vociferous reports of widespread infantilisation and the effects of 'induced childishness' and 'lifelong puerility' on adulthood (Barber 2007, p. 3). However, concepts of age-shared culture are not new. Chapter two documented children's folk music where traditional songs, nursery rhymes and lullabies often included the 'life and death' themes of adulthood. Equally, chapter three examined the commercialised world of music hall in which both children and adults participated as audiences, artists and employees. Previous discussions of the

¹¹⁰ Although as discussed previously, Jon Savage traced the consumption habits of proto-teens back to the 1875 (2008).

‘family’ nature of the target audiences of the BBC’s *Children’s Choice* and *The Muppet Show* highlighted the fluidity of age-defined genre categories. Zipes details an infantilised mode of intergenerational viewing fostered by the films of Disney in which children dissolve their separate identities and are ‘swept away as objects by the delightful and erotic images (Zipes, 1995, pp. 111-112).

This chapter assesses the commercial and aesthetic appeal of children’s musical culture to adults. Firstly, I examine the nostalgic impulse at the heart of Kindie Rock. This largely American sub-genre of children’s music brings together a range of musical styles not often seen in children’s music before the twenty-first century. I argue that the use of indie, punk, and new wave subverts the ubiquity of folk and music hall as vehicles for children’s music. This subversion, however, erodes previous paradigms, creating intergenerational communities of music consumers and, I argue, is symptomatic of the wider infantilisation of society. Secondly, I investigate the Japanese band Babymetal to explore representations of childhood and girlhood, and again, the ‘artificial youthfulness’ (Bernardini 2014, p. 48) of infantilised youth-obsessed adults. I look at how aural and visual signifiers of both childhood and adulthood are presented in their combination of J-Pop and intense metal, and discuss the socio-political drivers of their ‘cute’ (kawaii) aesthetic. The infantilisation of society is particularly manifest in Japanese culture and my final section documents the recent trend for virtual ‘vocaloid’ singers. Issues of power, control and gender representation are discussed with reference to Foucault’s metaphoric panopticon and how the capillary nature of power manifests itself in the vocaloid community. The manga and animé aesthetic of vocaloid involves exaggerated notions of childhood, girlhood and female sexuality. The digitisation of the female voice and the holographic representation of girls by men for the consumption of men is examined within the wider context of the infantilisation of consumer and wider culture.

8.1 The disappearance of childhood and the emergence of kidults

As traditional markers of childhood are being eclipsed, signifiers of adulthood seem equally on the wane due to the overwhelming rise of an age-denying, permanently-adolescent 'Peter Pan' culture and a 'postmodern immaturity' (Bernardini, 2014, p. 45). Infantilised adults have been coined kidults¹¹¹ and have 'a set of habits, preferences, and attitudes that encourage and legitimate childishness' (Barber 2007, p. 81). The commercialisation of kidults has occurred alongside the rapid growth of the market for young children. Toys,¹¹² comics, movies, graphic novels, television shows and music all reflect the new kidult aesthetic. Furedi notes how the 'resistance to growing up' is cultural. He suggests that mainstream films both foster and perpetuate an extended adolescence, noting how adult values such as independence and autonomy are often derided, and adults are portrayed as 'cynical ... boring and insensitive and out of touch' (in Rowe, 2015). Kidults are adults caught in an extended childhood free from the responsibilities and pressures of adulthood. Conversely, tweens are children who are 'twentysomething wannabes' (Linn, 2005, p. 131), desensitised to overt 'adult' sexuality (pp. 136-7). Bratz dolls (*ibid*, p. 143), mainstream music videos (*ibid*, pp. 136-7) and targeted marketing campaigns prioritise 'sassiness' and 'the edge' (*ibid*, p. 132) to which 'cool' kids must aspire. Simultaneously, kidult sells 'cool' back to adults as a cult of energy, excitement, vitality and youth (Mayo and Nairn, 2009, p. 25). Walter documents the cultural pressures on grown women to look like girls, and for females of all ages to resemble the 'doll' ideal through clothing, dieting, plastic surgery and other aspects of 'the body project' (2010, p. 65). Access to free online pornography and the wider 'pornification' of society have fostered a pre-pubescent, doll like aesthetic free from public hair (Walter, 2010, p. 3). Bernardini draws on the work of Linn (2004) and Barber (2007) to describe how the infantilised adult 'tends to childishness without pleasure, to indolence without innocence, dresses without formality, has sex without reproducing, works without discipline, plays without spontaneity, buys without a purpose, and lives without responsibility, wisdom or humility' (2014, p.

¹¹¹ Postman had previously identified the 'adult-child' (1994, pp. 98-119).

¹¹² Kidults now comprise up to 25% of all toy sales ("*Kidult world*"-Still small but with huge potential, 2013).

41).

This sharing of culture by children and adults is not new. Postman suggests that following some 'foreshadowing' of childhood by the Romans and the Greeks (1994, p. 8), medieval societies did not differentiate between children and adults. People of all ages shared culture, clothing, work, leisure, and the 'secrets' of 'adult' life. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, the development of the printing press and the resulting spread of literacy opened up a social gulf between those who could read (largely adults), and those who needed to become readers and thus achieve adulthood (largely children). The 'high-watermark' of childhood, Postman suggests, fell between 1850 and 1950 (p. 68) after which developments in information technology, such as the telegraph, radio and especially television started to erode age-specific boundaries. Unlike reading and writing, which take years to master, television, Postman argues, can be 'read' by everyone regardless of age, whilst 'the new media environment ... provides everyone, simultaneously, with the same information' (p. 80). Meyrowitz agrees, noting that whilst TV blurs age categories, it exposes 'the secret of secrecy: that adults are conspiring to censor knowledge' (1995, p. 39). Previously, literacy was used 'as a tool of control' (p. 42) and for adults to communicate with other adults. Similarly, Mead, in a prescient nod to digital culture, predicted a world of rapid change in which society's elders were no longer seen as the fonts of knowledge, ideas and morality (1970). She highlighted how such a world would democratise information and close the generation gap. Alluding to the infantilisation of wider society, 'the "adult information" to which children now have access includes distorted war stories with heroes and villains as one dimensional as those found in a children's bedtime tale. So manipulation, secret keeping, and propaganda persist' (Meyrowitz, 1995, p. 51). The standardised formats and plots of Disney's animated films promote 'an eternal return to the same kind of youth', driven by a nostalgic yearning for the simplistic binaries of childhood (Zipes, 1995, p. 110).

Concerns about children's use of television and digital media draw on essentialist views of childhood as a 'walled garden' in which technology is either absent or a benign presence. Postman pines nostalgically for a 'world that was once hospitable

to children' (1994, p. 148) and reveals his protectionist morality by advocating a monastic, intellectual tradition that will 'resist the spirit of the age' (p. 153). Such technological determinism fails to take account of the many and varied contributors to infantilisation. Populations across the world are living longer¹¹³ leading to an extended period of maturation, effectively delaying adulthood. A lack of meaningful employment opportunities and a dearth of affordable housing for young people have led to a growing number of three-generation households.¹¹⁴ Young people are increasingly postponing marriage, parenthood, mortgages and other traditional markers of adulthood (Rowe, 2015). An upward extension of the compulsory age of schooling and its increasing formalisation have bred a nostalgic longing for the safety and freedom of an imagined childhood. The pace of social, technological and political change and the increasing insecurity of life has lead adults to seek refuge in the certainty of the past. However, nostalgia is not only the cause but an effect of the infantilisation of adulthood. It informs the *Punk Rock Baby* CDs of chapter seven, the *High School Musical* movies of chapter six, the baby t-shirts featuring the logos of the Ramones, Blink 182 (Hann, 2002), and Harley Davidson (Linn, 2005, p. 42), and, increasingly, kidult culture. Recent successful 'youth-obsessed' (Barber, 2007, p. 93) film franchises such as *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* and *Marvel* superheroes (both now owned by *Disney*) and *D.C.* (now owned by *Time Warner*) comic-book superheroes from the 1940s onwards homogenise tastes (Barber, 2007, p. 3), exploit childhood memories and 're-sell nostalgic images of youth back to adults in a society that doesn't really want to grow up' (Mayo and Nairn. 2009, p. xvii). Movies such as *Zoolander*, *Forest Gump*, *Mr Bean*, *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* and *Napoleon Dynamite* highlight the cross-generational appeal of child-like adult characters. By instilling childish traits such as impulsiveness, ignorance and narcissism into adult consumers, multi-national companies have created 'a culture of impetuous consumption necessary to selling puerile goods in a developed world that has few genuine needs' (Barber, 2007, p. 81).

¹¹³ Life expectancy in the U.K. has risen around ten years in the last fifty years, and around forty years in the last 100 years (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

¹¹⁴ Over 50 million Americans live in households that have three or more generations represented (Generations United, 2015). There are more U.K. households now than in Victorian times that contain three or more generations (Perkins, 2014).

The next section explores how infantilisation, nostalgia, education and entertainment have combined to create a twenty-first-century 'family' music phenomenon.

8.2 Kindie Rock

Kindie Rock encompasses a well-established industry of live music gigs, festivals, discos and record releases created for, and marketed to families, rather than children. Largely an American phenomenon, kindie has developed into a sizable industry that has its own stars, sub-genres and trade fair (*KindieComm*). The roots of kindie can be traced back to the infrastructure of summer camps, venues and record labels that supported Pete Seeger and other folk musicians through the 1950s and 1960s, and to the alternative/indie music scenes of the 1980s. Kindie covers a wide range of musical genres, as does its adult equivalent indie. Indie is characterised by a non-corporate stance (independent of corporate systems of production and distribution), a non-rock aesthetic (introversion over extroversion; passivity over aggression) and musical signifiers such as melody (over discord) and untutored spontaneity. Many American kindie artists (and their previous bands) offer up either the folk/country strain, as exemplified by The Del Fuegos and Green on Red, or the punk-pop version derived from The Ramones, Blondie and a host of pre-Beatles 'girl groups' and guitar combos. A third inherently child-friendly form of indie became known as C86, 'twee', or even 'schmindie'. Bands such as The Pastels, Orange Juice, The Vaselines, and later, Belle and Sebastian exemplify the musicality, aesthetics and ideology of this sub-genre. It is characterised by semi-acoustic guitars, medium tempos, and clear, melodic, non-aggressive vocals often sung (and harmonised) by both men and women. Modern day kindie combines these three main strands of indie. Indie peaked in cultural significance in the U.K. in the mid 1980s to the early 1990s, and as the original indie musicians and fans have become parents, they have resurrected some of the community-based, non-corporate ethos, and musical characteristics of the genre for not only their children, but for themselves.

American artists such as Elizabeth Mitchell capture the essence of kindie; her 'family band' play festivals designed for families, and she makes songs and albums for children that are musically similar to her adult output. Mitchell has also recorded with Dan Zanes. As an ex-member of the alt-country band The Del Fuegos, Zanes is just one of the many former stars of American independent music who now make a living as kindie performers. Others include ex-member of The Presidents of the United States of America, Chris Ballew who now fronts Caspar Babypants, ex-punk rocker David Weinstone who started the Music for Aardvarks Band, and Sarah Shannon, formerly of *Sub Pop* band Velocity Girl who now fronts the punk rock children's band The Not Its!. Successful alternative rock band They Might Be Giants, and ska-punks The Aquabats have forged successful careers making albums for children and adult alongside their adult albums.



Figure 9

The Aquabats on stage

Mark Motherbaugh, former member of influential new-wave band Devo, has worked successfully in children's music, most notably composing the theme song 'Everything is awesome' for *The Lego Movie* (2014). Finnish band Heavisaurus play heavy metal for children and families whilst dressed as dinosaurs. In 2005, U.K. indie band Saint Etienne paired their adult album *Tales from Turnpike House* with *Up the wooden hill*, a collection of songs for children. Singer Sarah Cracknell suggests that the band were 'fed up with nasty kids music, where it's nasty keyboard sounds and

nasty voices' (Petredis 2005). John Linnell of They Might Be Giants reiterated the poor quality of most children's music claiming that 'the vast majority of people ... the people who are making it don't really feel like they have to hold themselves to a very high standard'. Members of acclaimed Glasgow indie band Belle and Sebastian have produced the animal-themed children's album *Down at the Zoo* (Too Many Cookes 2011) whilst in 2006 Rough Trade Records released *Colours are Brighter*, a compilation of children's songs written and performed by Jonathan Richman, Franz Ferdinand, Flaming Lips, Snow Patrol, The Divine Comedy, Ivor Cutler and a host of singers and bands not primarily associated with children's music.

As seen from the list above, kindie encompasses artists with *Disney*-endorsements (Zanes), their own TV series (The Aquabats Super Show!), and those producing limited runs of independently-produced CDs (Saint Etienne). A closer inspection reveals the range of musical styles and genres. Zanes' work generally draws on American roots music such as folk, blues and country; Caspar Babypants tends towards acoustic pop; The Aquabats play up-tempo ska-punk; Saint Etienne generally work in retro-sounding electro pop. Cracknell, Linnell and others talk about their disappointment with the quality of most children's music as being a motivation for producing their own. The 'kiddified' music mentioned in the previous chapter was diminished in complexity, and tonality, and simplified when compared to its adult equivalent, thus perpetuating ideas of childhood innocence and a constructed distinctiveness. Kindie challenges such separateness. As discussed in the introductory chapter, categorising music by age is problematic. Reference to Table 1 (p. 32) helps to explain why rock music of any form (rather than folk, music hall or pop) has only recently entered the children's music market. An analysis of a selection of songs¹¹⁵ by Kindie Rock artists reveals the musical, sonic and lyrical aspects of the genre (see Appendix 11). Acoustic instruments may signify nature, an absence of electricity and a pre-industrial rural life, however, an acoustic-based recording such as Casper Babypants' 'The stump hotel' features a mix of acoustic and electric instruments. Distorted guitars signify naughtiness, resistance and a rebellious 'punk rock' attitude, as in the case of The Not Its! 'Haircut', yet in They

¹¹⁵ The selection was made by locating the artist's most-watched *YouTube* children's videos.

Might Be Giants' 'I am a paleontologist', they add 'buzz', energy and excitement. Six out of eight of the indie artists selected are American resulting in the common use of folk and other roots music forms which tend towards harmony, and scale-wise melodies, rather than discord and chromaticism. Many of the songs do not use exclusively major and minor harmony, but a mix of both. Belle and Sebastian's 'The monkeys are breaking out of the zoo' follows the 'Nellie the Elephant' formula of minor key verses and major key choruses. It is reminiscent of popular children's song 'Dingle dangle scarecrow' in having half tempo verses and full tempo choruses. Interestingly, a number of the songs (Saint Etienne's 'Let's build a zoo', Caspar Babypants' 'The stump hotel' and The Not Its! 'Haircut') use minor pentatonic melodies and chord patterns, common in blues-based rock music. The rarity of these scales in children's music may stem from the adult ('real-life', sexualised) lyrical connotations of the blues, rhythm and blues, and other genres of African-American origin from which they are most associated. Interestingly, indie has the lowest CMQ score for lyrics (50%) of all the case studies in this thesis. This is despite a predominance of animal themes (signifying nature and spontaneity). These former punks, new wavers and alternative artists downplay their use of traditional song writing devices such as rhyme, metric definition and clear lineation more than the folk artists and the professional songwriters of music hall. It could be argued that the songs are simply not as 'well written'. Classic songwriting it seems is sacrificed for an inter-generational musical experience. The Aquabats in particular gained the lowest overall CMQ score of the indie acts (48%). A blend of complex chords (including dominant sevenths, and minor fourths and fifths), limited use of traditional songwriting devices and an unfocussed lyrical theme limits the childness of their song 'Super Rad'. The Aquabats are among a number of indie acts who make music for both children and adults under the same artist name.¹¹⁶ Apart from musical and aesthetic differences, the categorisation of children's music involves labelling and intentional marketing which effectively signposts to the audience, the media, and other related industrial players that the product is 'for children'. As Sterritt points out, 'it's highly unlikely that young children would have had access to

¹¹⁶ Saint Etienne, Belle and Sebastian and They Might Be Giants have also blended their adult and children's music careers under the same artist name.

music in a way that would have allowed them to find The Aquabats on their own' (2012). Whilst Saint Etienne and Belle and Sebastian's children's albums are clearly identified as such, the work of the Aquabats, and They Might Be Giants is often not. In this respect, Jonathan Richman is perhaps the godfather of kindie.¹¹⁷ In the 1970s, he included a number of what most observers (Alberti, 1999) would recognise as children's songs on his 'adult' albums. Although he never labelled them as such,¹¹⁸ songs such as 'I'm a little airplane', 'Hey there, little insect', 'Here come the Martian Martians', and 'I'm a little dinosaur' bare all the aural, musical and lyrical hallmarks of children's music. Unlike Richman's 'faux naïf' persona which relies on projections of innocence and vulnerability, The Aquabats adopt an adolescent aesthetic which is self-referential, resistant to authority and absolved of adult responsibility. I have drawn on Barber (2007, p. 83) and Bernardini (2014, pp. 49-52) to compile a list of binaries that categorise both childness and adulthood (Table 2, p. 213). These attributes are reflected in some of the musical signifiers compiled in Table 1 (p. 32). Like most music created by adults for children, kindie straddles these binaries. However, the adult impulse is often to educate and inform children, from a state of ignorance to one of understanding and wisdom, moving them from the left to the right column. Through cultural exposure, children become aware that they are different from adults, and that they lack the skills and knowledge that define adulthood. Thus, they internalise what it means to be a child through exposure to adult-created products for them. Table 3 (p. 214) employs the child/adult dualisms from Table 2 (p. 213) in a thematic analysis of the lyrics of a selection of songs to reveal how kindie contributes to the construction of childhood. This overview reveals that the most child-friendly music (100% for 'Taxi'; see Appendix 11) can accompany the most mundane adult experience (paying for a taxi), whilst the most child-like sentiment ('Super Rad' or 'Haircut') may not be musically, lyrically or sonically actualised in the most child-friendly way.

¹¹⁷ And, indeed punk and indie.

¹¹⁸ Richman did however contribute to the Belle and Sebastian-curated children's album *Colours are brighter* (Rough Trade 2006).

Childhood	Adulthood
Impulse and impetus	Deliberation and reflection
Certainty	Doubt
Insecurity	Self-confidence
Dependency	Independence
Play	Work
Pictures	Words
Instantaneous pleasure	Long term happiness
Egoism	Altruism
Narcissism	Sociability
Conformism	Diversity
Impermanence	Stability
Entitlement (rights)	Obligation (responsibilities)
The timeless present (now)	Temporality (past and future)
Individualism	Community
Ignorance	Knowledge

Table 2*Childhood/adulthood binaries*

The Protestant origins of childhood prioritise self-restraint, order, and rationality as signifiers of adulthood. Attributes such as complexity (in words and music), delayed gratification (satisfaction derived from active listening to the unfolding of a lengthy composition), slowness and temporality (an appreciation of the song's historical significance) signify an adult musical response that Adorno felt had disappeared with the mass production of popular music (1939). I would argue that unlike the soporific, baby-fied strains of *Rolling Stones Baby Style*, or the deliberately-backgrounded listening mode required by *The Mozart Effect* selections, kindie offers a comparatively adult complexity, sociability and sense of community. The recent culture of family discos, raves and festivals also reveals a middle-class bias which culture producers are keen to monetise.

Family musical products are the musical manifestations of the resistance to the kiddified culture detailed in the previous chapter, whilst being symptomatic of the wider infantilisation of adult culture in more detail below.

Artist	Song title	Signifiers of childhood	Signifiers of adulthood	Overall CMQ score
Dan Zanes	'Hello Hello'	Pleasure The timeless present	Community	66%
The Aquabats	'Super Rad'	Narcissism Certainty Dogmatism	-	48%
The Not Its!	'Haircut'	Individualism Egoism Entitlement	-	59%
Caspar Babypants	'The stump hotel'	Pleasure	Community Words	55%
Music for Aardvarks	'Taxi'	-	Knowledge Work Obligation	69%
They Might be Giants	'I am a palaeontologist'	-	Knowledge Work Words	72%
Saint Etienne	'Let's build a zoo'	Impulse Pleasure Pictures	-	62%
Belle and Sebastian	'The monkeys are breaking out of the zoo'	Impulse Pleasure Pictures Entitlement	-	76%

Table 3*Thematic analysis of Kindie Rock songs*

Adorno lamented the loss of individuated listening brought on by recorded music. He alluded to a childlike form of regressive listening caused by sameness, repetition and distraction. The middle-class fetish for kindie gigs and festivals (rather than the recorded product) restores some of the variety and newness lacking from standardised selections of child-like music. The accompanying obsession for all things vintage provides a safe illusion of individualism and some of the 'sensual pleasure' for which Adorno was nostalgic. Kindie combines many traditional tropes of childhood with adult sentiments in a musical form that parents can consume with their children. This sharing of culture effaces many of the constructed age-boundaries of childhood. As such it is symptomatic of wider societal shifts.

The next two musical case studies further examine ideas of infantilisation and the ways in which childhood culture has become attractive to adults and has, indeed, had a significant influence on the content and aesthetics of culture aimed at an adult audience. Discussions of the band Babymetal and the virtual pop stars known as vocaloids focus on representations of children and childhood. As such they exemplify the 'Japanification' of global culture.

8.3 Babymetal

Women have always been actresses

We're not foxes, not foxes.

We are maiden-like vixens

(Babymetal, 'Megitsune', Toy's Factory Inc. 2013)

In April 2016, Babymetal sold out the 12,500 capacity Wembley SSE Arena in London becoming the first Japanese band to headline the prestigious venue. Fronted by three girls in their mid-teens,¹¹⁹ the band blend the 'cute' aesthetic of *Hello Kitty* with the aggression of metal. The band's aesthetic, and that of other Japanese kawaii artists, contrasts in many ways with the overtly-sexualised tropes of tween music, and the pornification of youth popular culture. Rather than the 'too old too soon' thrust of tween, Babymetal are 'three little goth dolls' (Medoza, 2016) who foreground innocence and a pre-teen aesthetic. I attempt to explain their increasing appeal by contextualising them within the 'Japanification' (West, 2008) of popular culture. I argue that issues of age, gender and ethnicity render Babymetal subversive of dominant metal ideology, whilst their 'cuteness' reveals the power relationships behind the normative and limited social identities offered to young females. I adopt Judith Butler's ideas of the performativity of gender to suggest that perceptions of chronological age are partly constructed through gesture. In Babymetal's case, this involves vocal tonality, costume, dance and other visual

¹¹⁹ The singers began performing in Babymetal when two of them were ten and one was twelve.

signifiers. I compare Babymetal with Japanese virtual holographic vocaloid artists such as Hatsune Miku. Unlike tween where the child stars and young performers were largely designed to appeal to other children, I suggest that the appeal of Babymetal and vocaloids is mainly to adult men. Yet an examination of the 'cute' culture of *kawaii* reveals a female-driven resistance to social repression to which, I argue, Babymetal contribute. Ultimately, *kawaii* is rooted in the longing by adults for the perceived innocence, safeness and separateness of an imagined childhood.

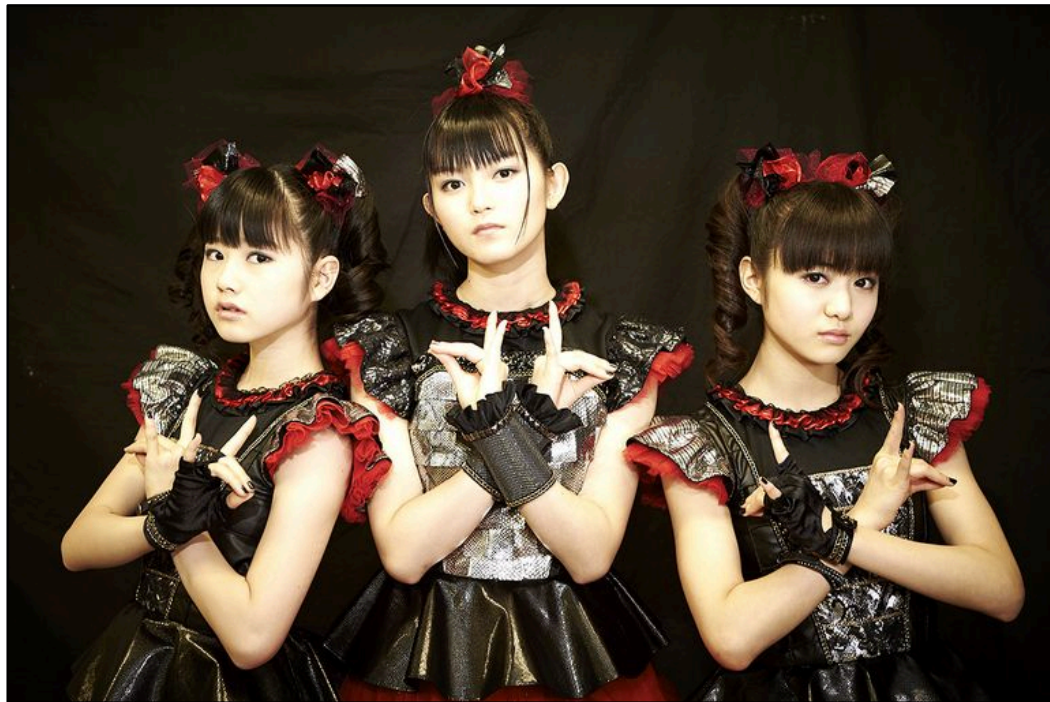


Figure 10
Babymetal

Formed in 2010, Babymetal are comprised of a tightly-choreographed female vocal trio backed by four all-male instrumentalists.¹²⁰ The band supported Lady GaGa on tour in 2014 and have performed at prestigious metal festivals around the world. In April 2016, the band's 'Metal Resistance' became the highest charting album by a Japanese artist in the U.K. charts.

Babymetal's music contains oppositional tropes which, I argue, signify both age and gender. The band blend elements of speed, thrash and death metal with electronic 'gabber'-style synths, blurred 'blast' beats and elements of J-Pop. Anthemic and

¹²⁰ The musicians in the band initially mimed to pre-recorded tracks. The girls always sing live.

melodic 'pure pop' choruses combine with uncompromising discord and distortion. The music has been described as 'Eurovision with speed metal interludes' (Ewens, 2016). A sample of their singles reveals that, in keeping with the speed metal genre, tempos are high, ranging from 140 bpm ('Megitsune') to 205 bpm ('Road of Resistance'). Minor keys are common ('Megitsune' and 'Road of resistance') whilst songs are generally longer than radio-friendly pop but appropriate for album-based metal ('Ijime, Dame, Zettai' is 6:09; 'Road of Resistance' is 5:17). Their success in Europe, America and other non-Asian countries is notable for the fact that the band sing almost exclusively in Japanese and feature Japanese themes, and imagery in their songs, and videos. Lead singer Suzuka Nakamoto (AKA Sumetal) was thirteen years old on the band's first recordings. As such her voice is generally high and pure of tone, although she delivers the occasional 'metal growl'.

The girls have retained a similar dress code over their six-year career; they wear short red and black puffball skirts, red hair bows, black sleeveless tunics and black over-the-knee stockings. They typify the punk/gothic version of the kawaii dress style. The all-male musicians (The Kami Band) dress in more typical metal attire, usually white robes with corpse face paint and straight black long hair. Consistent with the metal genre, the girls and the band rarely smile during performances but seem happy to do so in promotional activities.



Figure 11

Babymetal smiling with kawaii rabbit toy

Babymetal's age, gender and ethnicity provide a challenge to metal's Western, adolescent, male-dominated authenticity. Metal is 'a discourse shaped by patriarchy' (Walser, 1993, p. 109). It is 'quintessentially male' providing 'noise for the boys' (Borthwick and Moy, 2004). It offers young, white, working-class men an opportunity to confront 'anxieties that have been traditionally understood as peculiar to men, through musical means that have been conventionally coded as masculine' (Walser, 1993, p. 110). Yet gender is performative (Butler, 1988) with identities being constructed through performance, onstage visuals, gestures, and voices. Metal, 'for all its patriarchal posturing, is threatened ... by the dress and stage behaviour of the performers, in which gender codes are routinely mixed' (Blake, 1997, p. 138 in Borthwick and Moy, 2004). The late 1980s L.A.-based 'glam metal' scene and the inherent mix of masculine and feminine tropes in metal reveal the genre's self-reflexive, and often parodic ability to authenticate a range of gender codes. Walser stresses metal's role in articulating a variety of gender ideologies and identities whilst providing a discourse for the critique of normative notions of masculinity and femininity. He points out that the hyper-masculinity and androgyny of metal are symptomatic of the genre's ability to transgress dominant gender ideologies (1993, p. 109). Auslander concurs stating that performers challenge gender and other norms through realising them in often unconventional ways (2004, p. 6). Babymetal's growing popularity and seeming acceptance by the metal community seems to suggest that they have achieved some degree of credibility, something that Davies notes is 'almost completely unattainable for women' in rock (2001, p. 301). The rock press traditionally denigrates or ignores female performers, writing them out of historical retrospectives and ensuring that new artists are seen as novelties (p. 302). 'If men can provide the feminine' argues Davies, 'then women are redundant' (2001, p. 309). Suzi Quatro is a good example of the novelty status conferred on female rockers (Auslander, 2004). Misogyny in the music industry manifests itself as a focus on women's appearance, sexuality and 'women's issues' (Davies, 2001, pp. 302-305). To gain credibility in the world of metal, women need 'female machisma' and an ability to emulate male misogyny (Reynolds and Press, 1995, in Auslander, 2004, p. 6). They need to be 'one of the boys'. Guitarist Lita Ford and other women in metal have to combine their pin-up

status with an ability to 'embody [...] the spectacle of power' at the heart of metal (Walser, 1993, p. 132).

Babymetal's acceptance by the metal community is surprising considering their lack of attributes that signify authenticity and credibility within the genre. The band was conceived by producer and manager Key Kobayashi (also known as 'Kobametal'). Formed around the talents of lead singer Suzuka Nakamoto, Babymetal was a spin-off from two 'idol' all-girl pop groups, the ten-piece perma-smiling girl Sakura Gakuin and the smartly-dressed three-piece Karen's Girls. Japanese idols are generally all-round entertainers (singing, dancing, acting) from talent agency backgrounds who learn how to project cuteness, innocence and humility. As manufactured artists, they lack rock authenticity which demands self expression and a 'seriousness' and is 'inversely proportional to the extent to which their image is foregrounded' (Davies 2001, pp. 305-6). Babymetal are neither presented as 'one of the boys' (there are three of them) nor in possession of machisma. Unlike some tween stars or the young presenters of children's TV¹²¹ who have been criticised for inappropriately-sexualised dress or mannerisms, Babymetal are ostensibly desexualised with tropes of innocence and naivety¹²² foregrounded. They wear little in the way of make-up and their hair is cut into 'bangs' (straight fringes) often with pig tails. Their costumes are coordinated to resemble a uniform. The band's performance incorporates choreographed dance routines, a phenomenon rarely seen in metal. Uniformity of presentation and the disciplined, crafted talent agency aesthetic signifies schooling and control, rather than the Dionysian spontaneity and individualised-poeticism of male-dominated rock. Unlike the sexualised, adult-signifying moves of tween pop, Babymetal's dancing is generally athletic and aerobic, connoting the energy of youth. Karate¹²³ and other fighting and moves are sometimes incorporated, indicating the band's Japanese origins. Breakthrough single 'Gimme chocolate!!' signifies the joy of consumption whilst being conscious of body image:

¹²¹ Female CBBC presenters have been reprimanded for wearing red lipstick and provocative clothes (Duncan, 2014).

¹²² The singers apparently had no knowledge of heavy metal when the band started.

¹²³ 'Karate' is the title of one of band's 2016 singles.

Check it out. Chocolate.
 Can I have a bit of chocolate?
 But my weight worries me a bit these days.

Atypically of metal, the lyrics (some of which were written by the singers) address the issues of youth from a female perspective. Their first major label single 'Ijime, Dame, Zettai' has an anti-bullying message.¹²⁴ 'Megitsune' features themes of transformation based on the Japanese myth of a fox being able to transform at will. It seems to comment on the changing status of Japanese women:

Women have always been actresses
 We're not foxes, not foxes.
 We are maiden-like vixens
 The idea of what makes an ideal woman is changing.
 Smiling with our faces. Crying on the inside.
 Saying 'that's right' and never showing our tears
 A fox. A fox. I am a vixen.
 Women are actresses.

Written by the then thirteen-year-olds Yui Mizuno (Yuimetal) and Moa Kikuchi (Moametal), 'Yon ni Uto' reads like a traditional children's counting rhyme. The reference to death and social reform break the spell:

After one is two. After two is three.
 After three is, woo, four. Four, four! Four, four! Four, four! Four, four!
 Before seven is six. Before six is five.
 Before five is, woo, four. Four, four! Four, four! Four, four! Four, four!
 Four is for happiness and it doesn't mean 'to die'.
 Four is for failure.
 Four is for favour-asking ...
 Four is for vitamin C.
 Four is for joy ...
 Four is for social reform ...

With reference to Table 1 (p. 32), Babymetal's music (aside from the lyrics) overwhelmingly signifies adulthood with all but one of the attributes in right hand

¹²⁴ The lyrics translate as 'Bullying. No! Bullying. No! It's disgraceful No! No! No! No! Sometimes you get hurt. Sometimes you hurt someone and we all get badly hurt'.

column present.¹²⁵ The band's age and gender are often reduced to the shorthand of 'cute'. Yet as Walser points out, any band or artist will always signify gender, and this signification is discursive, dependent on socio-historical-industrial context (1993, p. 135). Despite its 'cute' child-like exterior, kawaii culture, like music hall, highlights sexuality through deliberate negation. The adult fetishisation of an innocent pre-pubescent aesthetic merely serves to emphasise an unspoken sexuality. Mendoza is rare in raising the possibility that Babymetal's appeal is in part paedophilic in her concert review (2016). The appeal of Babymetal and metal in general have been passed off as being rooted in irony and camp, their exaggerated gestures providing a guilty pleasure for gay men, and adolescents with fluid gender identities (Davies 2001, p. 309). Yet an understanding of kawaii as a cultural manifestation goes some way to explaining how Babymetal's appeal is, in part, driven by an adult nostalgia fuelled by social repression and the down-aging of mainstream culture. Metal's initial rebellion has become codified and neutered. As the genre has become mainstream, gestures that once antagonised the moral majority and religious groups have been replicated and commercialised, emptying them of their original social significance and power to shock. The constructed 'cuteness' of Babymetal and other Japanese cultural products is in itself a rebellion. Like the stereotypical hippies and punks before them, Japanese youth are increasingly resisting the responsibilities of adulthood. However, their rebellion involves adopting a child-like immaturity, rendering them incapable of taking up their societal duties (Kinsella, 1995, p. 243; Lee, 2005). Instead of adopting signs of 'cool' and adult sexual maturity, as seen in tween, rock'n'roll, modern R&B and many other music-driven youth movements, the now-globalised culture of kawaii turns nostalgically to a fictionalised childhood for its cues on cultural consumption.

Kawaii's 'cute' childlike aesthetic manifests itself in a wide range of popular cultural media from manga comics, computer games, the animé films of Hayao Miyazaki, toys, music, dress and behavioural traits. The word kawaii is a derivative of words for 'shy' and 'embarrassed', and encapsulates a range of childhood signifiers including sweetness, adorability, innocence, purity, simplicity, authenticity,

¹²⁵ Unlike Miley Cyrus, lead singer Sumetal has an age and gender-normative child's voice.

gentleness, vulnerability, weakness, and inexperience (Kinsella, 1995, pp. 221-222). Childlike anthropomorphosised animals such as Hello Kitty, Pikachu, and Pokémon exemplify the transmedial, global appeal of kawaii. Other more specifically Japanese manifestations include bonsai trees (Jackson, 2009, p. 28), fake-child writing (burikko-ji) and 'cute' food in the form of sweets, cakes, ice creams and deserts (Kinsella, 1995, p. 231). Japan's long-standing dominance of the computer games industry, and the commercial clout of Nintendo's *Donkey Kong*, and *Super Mario Bros.* have helped spread kawaii globally, and contributed to the wider 'Japanification' of Western culture (West, 2008, p. 85). Although some adolescent boys and men adopt an asexual, androgynous version of kawaii, the practice is highly gendered (Bremner, 2002). Kawaii dress styles for women emphasise an adult view of stereotypically-cute clothes. A middle-class Victorian aesthetic often dominates. Frills, ribbons, lace and pink are common (Kinsella, 1995, p. 229).



Figure 12

The 'cute' culture of kawaii

Sub-genres such as gyaru¹²⁶ (Figure 13, p. 224) are often pantomimic and kitsch versions of kawaii (Marx, 2012). Its highly-stylised visual tropes are derived in part from the impossibly-disproportioned girls of animé (Figure 14, p. 224).

The nostalgic tendencies that inform kawaii (and cosplay in which kawaii and vocaloids play a large part) reveal not only Boym's playful reflective mode (creating a bricolage of clothing, hair styles, make-up designs, music and other gestures from by-gone eras and disparate cultures) but the more purposeful restorative mode in which through the selection and deselection of signs and symbols, notions of

¹²⁶ There are many further sub-genres of gyaru.

childhood and hence adulthood may be reimagined and reconstructed. In this context, kawaii and the nostalgic wave on which it rides are empowering; through parody and pastiche they offer a critique of the harshness of modern life and hyper-consumerism (Lowenthal, 1989, p. 20; Pickering and Keightly. 2006. pp. 934-5; Stauth and Turner, 1988, p. 519). In Hello Kitty, kawaii and the raft of products informed by animé and manga, and the continued popularity of *Bagpuss*, *Children's Choice* and *The Muppet Show*, nostalgia's double-bind is commercialised as a 'soothing physic against loneliness and fear' (Lowenthal, 1989, p. 25). The products offer security in a turbulent world, through alluding to an idealised past, rooted in the familiar rather than the ever-changing uncertainty of modern life. Post-modernist ideas of an impending state of hyper-reality suggest that nostalgia will be increasingly unrecognisable in our daily lives as it assumes its place as a dominant world-view.

As well as nostalgic products, 'cute' also translates into modes of behaviour. The performance of vulnerability and innocence manifests as weakness, and disability. Kawaii icon Hello Kitty has a small body, no mouth, no fingers, large eyes, and bodily proportions that render her non-ambulant (Jackson, 2009, p. 31; Kinsella, 1995, p. 236). Taipei explains how in Japan, Hello Kitty represents 'the dull and docile femininity that always remains silent' (Jackson, 2009, p. 30). To Kinsella:

Being cute meant an act of self-mutilation, posing with pigeon toes, pulling wide-eyed innocent expressions, dieting, acting stupid ... in cute culture, young people become popular according to their apparent weakness, dependence and inability, rather than because of their strengths and capabilities'.

(Kinsella, 1995, p. 237)

Kilbourne has documented how the presentation of female American pop stars in promotional videos has become increasingly infantilised. Artists create adult-derived versions of childlike innocence through the adoption of 'very passive poses', whilst appearing 'limp [and] doll-like, sometimes acting like little girls, playing with dolls and wearing bows in their hair' (in Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013, p. 750).

Kawaii is a manifestation of the long history of the oppression and alienation of Japanese women. Japanese schooling is notoriously strict. Young people face high expectations on their academic and employment achievement whilst living in a culture of decreasing opportunities and increasing uncertainty (Jackson, 2009, p. 28). However, Japanese women are increasingly resisting adulthood, delaying marriage, and subverting normative femininities (Lee, 2005). Kawaii challenges the oppressive expectations on Japanese women to act coy, innocent, naïve and submissive (Bremner, 2002) by subverting them through exaggeration. 'Cute' provides a comforting cultural space of play, creativity, community and many other values traditionally associated with children and women.



Figure 13: Gyaru hair and makeup



Figure 14: Animé character by artist Shunya Yamashita

In Babymetal's six-year career, the members have grown from children into young women.¹²⁷ As the adult metal performers they will soon become, they face a challenge. Currently, their kawaii/ex-idol status demands performing a stylised version of childhood in which cuteness, and innocence are foregrounded. As such they are a subversive novelty in the world of metal. As the ex-Disney stars of chapter five must be acutely aware, the transition from constructed innocence to authentic adulthood in the public gaze is fraught with difficulty. Babymetal's ethnicity, clothing, hairstyles and athletic choreography may help them continue to appear younger than their years and convincingly 'perform' childhood. However,

¹²⁷ At the time of writing (June 2016) Moametal and Yuimetal are currently sixteen years old whilst lead singer Sumetal is eighteen.

any displays of adulthood, and especially sexuality (romantic relationships with other metal artists, perhaps) will begin to dispel the illusion of childhood so carefully constructed and performed thus far.

8.4 VOCALOIDs™

Chart-topping Japanese pop star Hatsune Miku is onstage. Despite performing arena tours all over the world, fronting million-selling video games and appearing in adverts for Toyota and Google, Miku begins to reflect on her manufactured status, the controlling power of her creators and her own mortality. She sings:

I once found such joy in those songs.
How is it that now I can not feel a thing? I'm sorry.
Now even singing tears my body apart
This is where we part ways.
My feelings have all vanished into thin air.
All but the memory of a voice will fade.
Nothing but a name shall remain.
The sounds I am able to sing get fewer every day.
The end is drawing near.

Singers musing on their impending death is not uncommon. For Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain, David Bowie, Ian Curtis and Richie Edwards such existentialism boosted their credibility and asserted their rock 'authenticity'. Yet Miku is a vocaloid, a 'collaboratively-constructed cyber celebrity' (*Who is Hatsune Miku?*, 2016). visualised as a childlike 16-year-old. As such, she can go much further than flesh and blood performers. Towards the end of the song 'The disappearance of Hatsune Miku' she falls to her knees. Her body starts to twitch. Her voice starts to falter and ... after a last 'Thank you. Goodbye' she disintegrates into a puff of pixels, symbolically dying onstage.

**Figure 15**

'The disappearance of Hatsune Miku'

Academic interest in vocaloids has been strong over the last five years or so. For example, the recently published 'Oxford handbook of music and virtuality' (Whiteley, S. and Rambarran, S., 2016) contains three articles about vocaloids (Conner, 2016; Jackson and Dines, 2016; Zaborowski, 2016) and many others about virtual pop stars and avatar rock bands. This section focusses on two aspects of vocaloids; representation and participation, the first of which is surprisingly under examined in the academy.

While there are a few male vocaloids, the vast majority are female. I argue that both visually and aurally, vocaloids present exaggerated and sexualised representations of childhood, especially girlhood, through the use of signifiers of innocence, vulnerability and other tropes the Romantic discourse of childhood. Whilst acknowledging the agency of vocaloid's producer-consumers, I argue that such representations affect how children, young people and increasingly adults view themselves. I use vocaloid's biggest star, Hatsune Miku to examine these ideas. I discuss the roles of traditional Japanese theatre, animé and manga in contextualising vocaloid, and explain how vocaloids have emerged symbiotically with the wider infantilisation of not just Japanese, but increasingly, world culture.

By way of explanation, vocaloids are virtual pop stars who exist as computer-generated voices and three-dimensionally projected performers. Like Apple's *Siri*, each vocaloid voice is created from nearly 4000 synthesised syllabic snippets derived from human voice artists.

Producers buy the vocaloid software and use these 'vocal fonts' to sing their melodies and lyrics. The songs are then uploaded to a hub bearing the vocaloid's name. To Miku's creator Hiroyuki Ito, she is 'a symbolic event' that allows users 'to create any number of productions through her' (Jarnes, 2013). To Burns, she is 'a shared creative framework that can amplify and hold a mirror to the people who participate in her community' (2016).



Figure 16

Hatsune Miku voice synthesiser software (left) and Miku on stage (right)

Miku has a potential repertoire over 100,000 songs, appeared in 170,000 *YouTube* videos and been the subject of over one million works of art (*Who is Hatsune Miku?*, 2016).



Figure 17

Sample of Hatsune Miku 'fan' art

Creative commons licensing arrangements allow other producer-consumers to adapt not only her music, but to manipulate her visual representation. Such a seemingly democratic process of artistic production contrasts with the Japanese idol system where managers and entrepreneurs maintain strict control over the image and branding of their young stars.

Detached from the original vocalists who are identified as part of the product, vocaloids are given names and biographic details such as height, weight, zodiac sign and blood type. Many are fourteen to sixteen. Visual representations generally exaggerate physical features that signify innocence and youth. Ankle-length hair, white skin, disproportionately large heads and wide eyes are dominant tropes. The software creators, animé designers, producers and audience members of vocaloids are overwhelmingly male. Miku's creator is a man in his forties, whose vision of democratic creative expression has found form in a mutated, infantilised image of a Japanese school girl. His 'muse' is a sixteen-year-old designed to look much younger. He acknowledges some of the problems that non-Japanese observers may have with Miku's 'cuteness'. Vocaloids, animé, manga, and increasingly globalised digital culture seems to be informed by a hetero-normative adolescent male aesthetic. As projections, young women as vocaloids are transparent, alien and distant, as far from real flesh-and-blood women as possible. The programmable nature of vocaloid software and the robotisation of women presents them as manageable and controllable. In vocaloid, the ideal woman is a girl, deferential and coquettish with pornstar-esque qualities.

Unlike the rich, rounded and ragged voices of Miley Cyrus, Brenda Lee and other female child stars famed for their projections of adult sexuality, Miku's voice both signifies and exaggerates normative notions of age and gender. Vocaloid voices are generally high of pitch, thin and breathy with little in the way of projection or dynamics. The artificiality of their production is deliberately foregrounded. Auto-tuning, severe pitch jumps, unnaturally rapid syllabic delivery and other aural markers of synthesisation are not only audible but are employed in a playful, carnivalesque way. Previously, I discussed how the manipulation of Miley Cyrus'

voice through the use of auto-tuning symbolised the wider control of children by adults, and of women and girls by men. Emily Baker uses the analogy of cosmetic surgery when discussing the use of pitch correction techniques to sweeten and beautify older female voices (2016). The use of auto-tuning on young voices is more akin to a dental brace, contact lenses or other invisible prosthetic device designed to control 'incorrect' expression and ensure the outward appearance of normalcy, in this case a regularity of pitch that signifies adulthood.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault discusses how power is normalised (in Merquior, 1991, p. 108) through conditioned, everyday experiences in what he calls 'rituals of truth' (*ibid.*, p. 109). He identifies a 'cratic' form of power that individuals internalise ensuring that the disciplining mechanism is at once ubiquitous, anonymous and comprehensive (*ibid.*, p. 114). Foucault points to 'an ascending analysis of power' which manifests in 'infinitesimal mechanisms' at the capillary edges of modern culture (*ibid.*, pp. 113-114). Although he later qualified his ideas of the ubiquity of power, Foucault's 'panopticon' vision is apparent in the recent infantilisation of society and in its capillary expressions in vocaloids, Babymetal and kawaii culture. Whilst Miley Cyrus' voice subverts normative notions of sexuality, gender and age, vocaloids and many other pop-cultural manifestations of Japanification, rely on hetero-normative assumptions. The robotisation of women as vocaloids reinforces the infantilisation of women; the ideal woman is a girl, deferential and coquettish with pornstar-esque qualities (see Danaher's discussion of sex robots, 2016). The programmable nature of vocaloid software renders women controllable. As holograms they are transparent, alien, distant and 'Other', as far from real flesh-and-blood women as possible.

Some vocaloids such as Hatsune Miku appear 'live' onstage projected onto transparent scrims in front of performing musicians and backing dancers. Authors have placed vocaloids in the context of traditional Japanese Bunraku puppet theatre where the puppeteers make no effort to hide themselves. By 'watching the puppet's manipulators' suggests Jenkins 'we acknowledge that the puppet is an illusion at the same time that we allow ourselves to be deceived by the illusion' (in Jackson and Dines, 2016). 'For a few timeless and irrational moments' he continues

‘the Bunraku puppet connects us to our naked hunger for illusion.’ Seen as part of a dominant social and cultural discourse that includes bunraku, animé and manga, vocaloids are both the product and the representation of a set of cultural norms regarding gender, age and other variables. As such they ‘read’ very differently in Japan and the Far East than they do in the West. In an infantilised culture, children are simultaneously fetishised for their ‘authentic’ child-like traits, whilst being rendered socially invisible by a society that no longer aspires to adult values that rely on generational differentiation. As such, childhood as a discrete and identifiable category is effaced.

Whilst Miku’s onstage demise highlights the resistant and playful impulse of vocaloid, creator Hiroyuki Ito’s vision of global and democratic creative expression has found form in a mutated, infantilised image of a Japanese school girl. Similarly, Babymetal’s creator Key Kobayashi and main songwriter Nobuki Narasaki are middle-aged men projecting their ideas of youth, energy and young femininity through three (initially) pre-pubescent girls performing ‘cute’. Dagbovie-Mullins talks about how African-American female singers are increasingly presented as both infantilised and hyper-sexualised by the media (2013, p. 746). She explains how the ‘sexy schoolgirl’ image is a recurring trope in music videos where it frames a ‘juvenile demeanor and style of dress that suggests that her body is both forbidden (morally and legally) and yet available’ (p. 747). Ex-child star Charlotte Church suggests that ‘what this industry seems to want of its women increasingly is sex objects that appear childlike’ (2013). She draws attention to the 1999 *Rolling Stone* cover in which ex-Disney ‘mouseketeer’ Britney Spears appeared on a bed in her underwear with a toy Teletubbie.

The infantilisation of musical and wider culture has produced unexpected and seemingly-contradictory results. Kawaii idols and vocaloids represent a range of conflicting qualities, many of which, I suggest, would have been considered undesirable in a more ‘adult’, less infantilised society. The values that have traditionally shaped adulthood (and conversely defined childhood) have been swept aside by a globalised transmedial profit-focussed tsunami that increasingly relies on childlike traits such as narcissism, individualism, dogmatic certainty and presentism

(Bernardini, 2014, p. 40 and p. 44). Clearly, this has significant implications for those seeking to make sense of a world increasingly polarised along religious, gender, class and economic lines.

8.5 Conclusion

Babymetal, vocaloids and the cuteness of kawaii raise a number of contradictory issues. As products of adult male creators, they are the stylised and artificial projections of nostalgic, and potentially paedophilic notions of childhood, innocence, and femininity. Critiques and reportage of vocaloids and Babymetal rarely mention that they are female children, presented in ways that amplify their innocence and naivety. That such a process has become normalised through mainstream consumer capitalism validates Foucault's panopticon allegory. Barber suggests three main ways in which the seeming ubiquity of infantilisation can be resisted. Firstly, he describes 'cultural creolization', a counter-colonising process in which dominant and subdominant cultures merge to form new hybrid varieties (2007, pp. 262-271). The Japanification of global culture is a good example. Infantilisation is another whereby adults retreat into childlike consumer habits to create a new socio-cultural category. Secondly, Barber highlights the potentially-subversive powers of 'cultural carnivalization' in which childlike traits such as fun, desire, and puerility may in fact translate into an inclusive, liberating, playful form of consumerism in which young and old can participate (pp. 271-281). Barber is critical of this approach, explaining how:

The infantilist ethos may then be a call to carnival, a bit subversive with its appeal to release the repressed child and let her come out to play, but ultimately it is incapable of subverting the power that has produced it as an instrument of control.

(Barber, 2007, p. 280)

Barber's final resistive technique is 'culture jamming' in which mass media signs and symbols are hijacked, and subverted in a process of *détournement*. The

participatory nature of vocaloid production¹²⁸ offers the potential for such subversion. The onstage ‘death’ of the genre’s biggest star seems to subvert the tropes of youth and vitality that drive kawaii. However, vocaloid creators, producers, songwriters and animators seem intent on confirming hegemonic narratives of gender and young female sexuality.

In many ways Kindie Rock bucks the infantilising impulse of modern culture. Its espousal of nostalgic ‘adult’ values of community, responsibility and an informed maturity blurs age boundaries. However, the musical and lyrical analysis offered above reveals some of the contradictions central to the kidult aesthetic. Babymetal subvert metal, yet ultimately the singers’ status as children, and their clinically-coordinated desexualised female innocence renders them of little threat to metal’s male-adolescent ideology. No matter how accomplished as vocalists, songwriters and performers, the machisma of metal singers Lzzy Hale of Halestorm, Brittany Paige from Kobra And The Lotus or Jill Janus from Huntress will always be met by misogyny from the anonymised safety of an infantilised internet.

The commercialisation of children’s culture often evokes protectionism, suggesting that children, as consumers, and in Babymetal’s case, artists, are naïve and vulnerable dupes in an evil, corrupting, corporate-controlled world. Yet, as discussed above, kawaii is often a conscious and systematic female-led resistance to the adult world. Some of the values identified as ‘adult’ in Table 1 (p. 32; such as work over play, and words over pictures) point to a rationalist, post-Enlightenment ideology that might culturally code as male. In this context, infantilism is subversive with women in numbers turning away from the strictures of Japanese society, the high expectations of middle class elders and uncertain futures, towards a playful and spontaneous eternal present in which they are, to a large extent, productive. As adult women increasingly ‘perform’ childhood in a postmodern hyper-commercialised culture, and children are increasingly competent consumers, childhood as a discrete and identifiable category is eradicated. In an infantilised

¹²⁸ Participants will need an \$100 Vocaloid editor, at least one \$100 library of vocaloid sounds, a suitable digital audio workstation (DAW) such as Cubase or Logic, a computer and peripherals, making vocaloid production inclusive only to the tech-savvy with time and money.

word, children are simultaneously fetishised for their authentic childlike traits, whilst being rendered socially invisible by a society that no longer aspires to adult values. Nearly twenty years ago, Stephen Heath noted how:

The end of childhood ... coincides with its endless prolongation: on the one hand, the despair at the ever-shrinking moment of childhood; on the other, the obstinate refusal of adulthood, the demand for a maintained state of irresponsibility and dependence.

(Heath, 1997, p. 23).

However, adult values such as tolerance, diversity, sociability, and community are exemplified in the recent and increasingly mainstream acceptance of transgender, and issues of alternative sexuality identity, driven, it seems, by young female popular music stars such as Kim Petras, Ataru Nakamura, Miley Cyrus, Azalia Banks and Ke\$ha, and animated children's television (Puglise, 2016). Similarly, teenage activist, author and youngest-ever Nobel prize recipient Malala Yousafzai exemplifies the power of children to effect change and stimulate dialogue on a global scale, whilst aspiring to adult values of rationalism, and mature contemplation. In infantilisation, Heath glimpses a new childhood and an impetus for the burgeoning children's rights movement. Meanwhile adults' investment in childhood remains high; in the kidult, Heath sees 'adults ... clinging protectively to the skin of the present' desperately trying to retain 'a feeling of childhood against the diminishing sense of any future' (1997, p. 24). He notes how 'societies ... have drifted so far from an ethics of citizenship to an individualism of increasing childness' (1997, p. 27). Children as conceived and constructed in long-standing and normalised discourses of childhood are a 'stumbling block for democracy today' (*ibid.*). Like Buckingham, Heath notes how 'the end of childhood is doubtless the condition of a very substantial new beginning, with childhood future times a very different story.'

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how records that are made specifically for children, or those that have by some circumlocutious route ended up being associated with childhood, contribute to the construction of childhood. The case studies have revealed a range of such childhoods that have affected, and continue to affect particular children in particular places at particular times. The dynamic, ever-changing, socially-prescribed nature of childhood identified by Heath, Buckingham and others is evident in the analyses presented here. If anything, it is the seemingly-cyclical nature of childhood that has become apparent (1997, p. 27). The folk music of Pete Seeger, Lead Belly and *Bagpuss* evokes Ariès' Medieval pre-childhood. The songs of Woody Guthrie document the domestic routines of a New York childhood of the 1940s and the immediacy of the relationship between a song writer and their 'real' daughter. Both *Children's Choice* and *The Muppet Show* exemplify Heath's 'ethics of citizenship' (1997, p. 27); the differences in decade, national identity and commercial remit account for the varying conceptions of childhood produced by John Reith's moral sense of children as citizens and Jim Henson's inclusive view of children as intergenerational viewers. The records broadcast on *Children's Choice* in the 1950s and early 1960s are perhaps music's best equivalent of children's literature's 'golden age'. The pre-Beatles compositions and productions by George Martin capture something of the range and complexity of childhood. They evidence a parodic and antagonistic relationship with adulthood, and provide an accessible format through which children can form lasting and meaningful relationships with the texts, qualities noted by scholars of the 'golden age' of literature. The increasing categorisation of music by age of the recipient, dictated by consumerism and marketing, has narrowed the reach of individual products; considerations of age, gender, childness and other social factors fuel a children's market stratified by commercialism and individuated by digital media. This is particularly apparent in the products mentioned in chapters six, seven and

eight. Foetuses, babies, toddlers, young children, and older children each have their own musical products differentiated to express differences in national identity, class and gender. The upper end of tween (originally conceived at twelve but ever decreasing) now blurs with the lower end of the implied audience for infantilised songs, films, TV shows and digital media. In cultural terms, childhood ends where it fades into the fog of adulthood.

It is the pace of the change in the redefinition of childhood, driven by the social impact of digital media that is perhaps most apparent. Similarly, the academic study of childhood media has increased concurrently with the growth in the commercialisation. Miley Cyrus was just fifteen when I started this study; Justin Bieber was fourteen. Babymetal had not yet formed and vocaloids had not been invented. Raffi had stopped making music and the Muppets had not made a film for nearly ten years. Key players such as Pete Seeger and George Martin have died during my investigations. Perhaps the most significant impact on both academia and the industry was the criminal investigations into some of children's music's biggest icons. Jimmy Savile and Rolf Harris both made records for children and hosted high-profile TV shows for children and families. The fallout of Operation Yew Tree has, no doubt, increased the sensitivity of the subject area and highlighted the ethical issues of researching children and childhood. In studies of aural texts, the negative effect is limited; records are not children. However, future ethnographic studies of children will no doubt be subject to increased ethical and legal consideration.

The historical overview of the subject has helped reveal that whilst the commercial ubiquity of *Kidz Bop*, *High School Musical*, *Hannah Montana* and tween may be new, however, children's musical products that combine tropes of both adulthood and childhood have always existed. The infantilisation described in the previous chapter has a precedent. As documented eloquently by Jon Savage, the 1890s saw a similar fetishisation of youth, health, vitality and fitness, a quest for pleasure and an 'infinite prolongable now' (2007, pp. 54-55).

As discussed above, childhood continues to be reconceptualised by social and cultural forces, and by children themselves. Digital media and the nostalgic

response they elicit are perhaps the best evidence of new definitions of childhood, albeit ones that have echoes in studies of Medieval (children as adults), Victorian (children as agentic breadwinners) and rural indigenous (children as members of families and communities) childhoods.

The discourses of childhood implied by the various case studies in the preceding chapters are summarised in Table 4.

Decade	Discourse of childhood	Examples
1940s and 1950s	Child as a member of a community. A citizen with wider social responsibilities.	Folk music. Live participatory music events. Sing-alongs. Summer camps. Intergenerational radio broadcasts. Records released by <i>Folkways</i> , <i>Young People Records</i> , <i>Children's Record Guild</i>
1950s and 1960s	Child as a family member consuming partially-age-differentiated musical products in discrete intergenerational settings (homes, cinemas).	<i>Children's Choice</i> . Children's music programming on BBC Radio (<i>For the children</i> , <i>Listen with mother</i> , <i>Children's choice</i> . <i>Children's hour</i>). Disney films.
1970-80	A partially-individuated viewer/listener consuming age-differentiated products with a parent or carer	<i>Sesame Street</i> . <i>Bagpuss</i> . Children's music programming on BBC television and ITV. <i>Play School</i> . <i>Play Away</i> . <i>Handful of songs</i>
1990s	Increasingly-individuated consumers of increasingly-transmedial products.	<i>The Wiggles</i> . <i>Barney</i> . Tween music. <i>Hannah Montana</i> . <i>High School Musical</i> . <i>Camp Rock</i> .
Early 2000s	Child as consumer with their rights and identity driven by consumption	<i>Kidz Bop</i> , <i>Pop Jr</i> . CBBC. CBeebies. Nickelodeon. Nick Jr. Nicktoons. Cartoon Network.
2010s	Child as consumer-producer framed in an intergenerational infantilised society	Babymetal, Kindie Rock. Vocaloids. YouTube viewers and presenters. Films of Pixar.

Table 4

Changing musical discourses of childhood

Appendix 14 attempts to depict the scope and influence of the various case studies. On a graph representing the childness of the adult producer on the y-axis and the childness of the listener/viewer on the x-axis, *Children's Choice* and *The Muppet Show* are by far the largest bubbles. The scope and variety of their extensive playlists and their reliance on music (rather than lyrics) with high levels of childness strikes the balance (that 'sweet spot'; Ben Faulks, CBeebies' Mr. Bloom, 2016) between providing material for children in a format with which they can engage,

and content within that format that will reward them and allow them to grow with the songs. Kindie Rock is the only other example in which the target audience (the implied readership) and the childness of the texts are defined broadly enough to accommodate a similar range of listeners. Although the soft edges of the categories and the overlapping Venn-style representation allude to the blurred delineation between categories of implied age in both text and audience, the diagram shows how the examples vary in their ability to engage with their implied listenership. The bottom right corner of the graph shows that if the reader's childness is high, yet the childness of the text is low, most children would experience some sort of disconnect; the text would sustain their attention only momentarily and be considered 'too adult' at that point in their lives. Conversely, the top left corner indicates how texts with high degrees of childness will be unappealing to adults whose childness is low. The songs will be considered puerile, overly simple and annoying.

One of the main questions raised by this study was that of the categorisation of children's music. Considerations of the childness of the texts (measured by the CMQ), the variegated responses of the implied reader informed by notions of competence and agency, and the contextualisation of texts in industrial, legal, historic and mediated social settings have revealed not only the differences between intention and reception, but also the day-to-day working definitions that are required for the smooth running of the children's music market. The close correlation of intention with reception equates to useful widely-recognised categories. In the context of children's music, when both the childness of the product and of the listener are high (top right of Appendix 14) then a successful 'listening event' takes place. In that case, both the listening event and the record that sound-tracked that event may be called 'children's music' (see Hollindale, 1997, p. 29). The songs of *Sesame Street* are perhaps the best example of this in this thesis. For completeness, when adult readers (or even some children) encounter a text of 'children's music', the text may be referred to as 'music' (left hand side of Appendix 14; see Hollindale, 1997, p. 29). However, implied readership can be misdirected; the age implied by the product may not meet the needs of the

recipients. Records for children can be subverted through parody, pastiche, kitsch and other mechanisms of re-appropriation. Equally, they may attempt to subvert and reframe particular discourses of childhood. The genre-expanding tendencies of recent 'children's' songs on *Yo Gabba Gabba*, *Horrible Histories* and *SpongeBob SquarePants* highlight how atypical texts may resonate with childhoods increasingly defined by fluidity and dynamism.

The use of case studies and a structuralist approach has helped to detect some of the distinctions between various cultures of childhood, and also reveal the themes that continue to define children's music and hence childhood. While the 650 or so songs of *The Muppet Show* contain the occasional pensive and existential 'Halfway down the stairs', or the thousands of songs of *Children's Choice* the odd reflective 'Two little boys', children's music as a 'genre' (personally I prefer marketing category) continues to be characterised by optimism, positivity, bright colours, and smiles. The Wiggles, who exemplify these qualities, are by far its most successful proponents.

In reference to Hollindale and his conception of children's literature (1997, p. 30), I post this definition:

Children's records contain common, or similar features to inspire creativity and imagination that when activated by children during listening events may be deemed children's records.

The examination of both text and context has helped to explain what happens when adults create music for children. The CMQ reveals the degree to which dominant tropes of childhood are evident in the text. Contextual analysis highlights the circumstances by which those tropes became part of the text. Reader response theory completes the cycle by anticipating the extent to which real children make sense of the songs and consequently their world. As discussed throughout, the concepts of implied readership and target audiences are haunted by the spectres of imagined, mythologised children. Ethnography and interviews with children would highlight the degree to which individual children unlock and engage with signifiers

in specific texts. Historicity, issues of geography and other aspects affect reception. The study's main focus is on the 'nuts and bolts' of children's records by examining the context of the song's creation in an attempt to answer why they sound that way. As such, I examined the production side of the construction of children's music, whilst merely speculating on the role that children play in the (de)construction of the songs as part of their lived childhoods. However, I am hoping that 'real' child listeners have been considered through repeated reference to the roles of implied readership, competence and agency in fostering individualised responses to the records analysed. Extensive reader-focussed research would go some way to revealing individual children's interpretations of specific musical texts. Excellent work in this area has been done by Baker (2001), Richards (1995), and Trehub, Bull and Leigh (1984) among others. Assessing what children make of these songs and cultural items, what they do with them, and how they interpret them, is an important part of any commercial-industrial process, providing essential feedback for children's culture producers. Whether a specific reader can competently decode the (intended or otherwise) metaphor and allegory of specific texts such as 'The bird on Nellie's hat', 'Any old iron', 'Rainbow connection', *Charlie and the chocolate factory*, *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* or *Lord of the rings* is a matter for conjecture until ethnographic research triangulates the process.

Further research of *Children's Choice*, for example, could more fully contextualise the recordings through the sourcing of more varied and up-to-date BBC policy documents, and a more detailed investigation into the social, technological, legal and commercial factors that affected the show in the 1950s and 1960s. This could include investigation into the use of radio pluggers (if any), promotions companies and marketing strategies used by *Parlophone*, *Capitol* and *EMI* for their children's records. More certainty about the intended demographic by children's music promoters could be gained through the analysis of advertisements for recordings and features about artists in children's magazines, artists' appearances on specific children's TV shows such as *Crackerjack* and *Blue Peter*, the language used in press

releases, the aesthetics of specifically-designed record sleeves, and the nature of press photographs.

Assessment of adults' involvement in the text was achieved primarily through the use of the CMQ which compiled a range of signifiers of children's music and then used that list to quantify the amount of childness in specific records, artist's repertoires and sub-genres of children's music. As such, it sought to build on the work of Hollindale in particular to give some sense of *the degree of childness* in a text. Ideas of typicality were used to find the twenty-nine common features. Each feature had to be present or not; there was no partial marking. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the CMQ was based on 'The autism quotient' or AMQ (Auyeung, *et al*, 2008). Like my study, the AMQ does not try to elicit definite 'yes' or 'no' answers as to whether someone taking the test has autism or Asperger's Syndrome; it merely produces a score on a graded scale (the autistic spectrum) as to *the degree of autism* an individual might have. Although Hollindale explains how the exposure to 'children's music' by adult listeners produces 'music', this approach would explore just one niche sub-genre of children's music, children's music for adults, which whilst being a recognised market (children's music academics often need to buy the music that they study) was not the main focus of my study. My CMQ was compiled, after much deliberation, from the most typical signifiers of childness in the three categories of the records (Music, Lyrics and Sonics). On reflection, apart from the strictly technical aspects of the records, such as the number of bars in a verse, the average tempi, the highest notes and the widest vocal intervals, considerations of timbre in the voice and in the production style of the records will always be subjective. A revisited version of the CMQ would aim to objectify some of the criteria and clarify what is meant by '*obviously* educational, didactic or moral intent' (obvious to who?), '*high* levels of metric repetition' (how high is high?) and 'clear diction' (how clear is clear?), for example. In my defence, the criteria on the original AMQ are far from objective¹²⁹ and my discussions of categorisation in the introduction stressed the usefulness of even the most typical

¹²⁹ The first self-diagnosed indicator of autism on the AMQ reads 'I prefer to do things with others rather than on my own'.

attributes in providing definitions of musical genre that work for a range of music industry participants, despite their subjectivity. More criteria would decrease the inherent subjectivity whilst the analysis of more texts would provide the statistical significance that would add a veneer of scientific rigour. The selection of the texts in the individual case studies has been explained where relevant. Either they were the only texts ‘for children’ that that artist produced, or they were the entire musical contents of a TV show (such as *Bagpuss*), or they were the highest-rated YouTube clips by the most prominent artists in that sub-category (Kindie Rock, for example). Equally, the CMQ could be used to identify the childness of records not explicitly intended for children. The CMQ could be used to assess listeners’ engagement with any text in any well-established musical genre with texts that share typical features. For example, a typical text of rock’n’roll music such as ‘Tutti frutti’ by Little Richard shares more of the hallmarks of children’s music than the outwardly-similar ‘Baby, let’s play house’ by Elvis or ‘Hound dog’ by Big Mama Thornton. Such ‘adult’ songs may share more of the CMQ attributes than songs already canonised as ‘children’s music’ through the discursive processes of repeated selection, broadcasting, reiteration, transcription and critical reevaluation. As raised in discussions of tween and the records of Miley Cyrus, genre, marketing and other industrial factors are influential in a record’s current (but perhaps not future) status as a children’s record.

The graph in Appendix 13 summarises the CMQ scores in the three categories for six of the case studies. As mentioned previously, Music, rather than Lyrics or Sonics is the most obvious signifier of childhood in a children’s record. Music with particularly high levels of childness was identified in the work of Woody Guthrie and in the songs of the recent *Children’s Choice* compilations, which have undergone a process of increased childness since their original broadcast on radio. Lyrics are the second most significant factor with again the two previous examples leading the field. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the ‘family music’ examples (*The Muppet Show* and Kindie Rock) score relatively low in this area as their main purpose is to attract and ensnare adults through suitably-‘adult’ lyrics. Sonics plays a much less significant role in folk music (the recordings are basically ‘live-in-the-studio’) and *The Muppet*

Show (arrangers and recording engineers seem to have made little concession for their younger listeners). However, the recordings of *Children's Choice* have the highest scores in this area, further supporting my argument that the records produced for 'family' consumption during the 1950s and 1960s form something of a 'golden age' of children's recordings. Producer George Martin, an adult with high levels of childness, has brought his considerable skills in musical arrangement, writing, orchestration and recording to the production of records with high levels of sonic (and not inconsiderable levels of musical and lyrical) childness, voiced by artists (Rolf Harris, Terry Scott, Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan) who were uninhibited about expressing (or performing) their own high levels of childness in front of a microphone. Add in a corporation who wanted to foster intergenerational relationships through the medium of children's broadcasting and you have the creative, industrial and moral elements of a 'perfect storm' of endearing and enduring children's records.

For the reasons stated in the introduction (accessibility, profile, common reference points, well-established industrial systems, well-defined discourses of childhood) the study has been dominated by children's music of American (Guthrie, Lead Belly, Seeger, Cyrus), Canadian (Raffi), British (the BBC, Saint Etienne, Donovan) and hybrid-nationality (UK and USA, *The Muppet Show*) origin. That such a limited selection only represents a narrow view of the wide range of childhood experiences available is obvious. I would suggest that westernised countries with an investment in discourses of childhood similar to those covered in the introduction could detect similar themes in their national children's music. Countries in which childhood is less well defined, or defined by different discourses, may be able to adapt some of my analytical method and themes for their use, although as mentioned previously, the musical elements of the CMQ are based around western tonality and the twelve tone diatonic scale which may not be dominant in non-western countries. Interestingly, the final two case studies evidenced the increasing global influence of Japanese music and culture.

Further consideration needs to be made concerning the relevance of literary theory in its application to the textual analysis of music. Clearly similarities exist between

the words of songs and those of poems, prose and other literary forms. Yet, whilst Nodelman, for example, has examined children's picture books, much of the theoretical work has been conducted on children's fiction. The extent to which music and sonic factors resemble pictures and other paratextual elements has been discussed previously. Clearly issues that originated in the theorisation of literature (texts, implied readership, intertextuality) have informed studies of music as a text and the reception of music. However, more work needs to be done to develop the textual analysis of popular music itself (of which children's music is a sub-set) which relies less on traditional notation and more on performance.

The final chapters highlighted seemingly-paradoxical discourses of childhood. On the one hand young children have been hived off into increasingly narrow age-defined categories, whilst simultaneously childhood at its uppermost reach has become increasingly up-aged into adulthood. In the rapidly-changing landscape of childhood, driven increasingly by marketing and nostalgia (and the marketing of nostalgia) such conflicting constructions coexist. I would argue that they are symbiotic. As discussed in the previous chapter, in a post-modern society, with adult nostalgia in its fullest, most normalised and invisible conception, children and the childness they represent are reified and beatified, religious allegories that reveal something of the angelic conception of childhood innocence and the separation that adults need from childhood as an enduring binary for their internalised nostalgic yearnings. The study of children's music and of childhood is bound by Giddens's 'double hermeneutic'. Any definitions of a new form of childhood merely reinforce the idea that childhood is a constructed paradigm.

Overall, I hope that the study convinces readers of the importance of musical recordings in children's lives and their role in helping them to understand something of who they are as children, in the state of childhood in which they exist. Furthermore, I have attempted to show that the best children's records can engage their imaginations and allow them to form meaningful relationships with the texts so that as they grow up, the records are able to grow with them, offering support and insight as required.

Lastly, I hope that this study stimulates debate and goes some way to convincing other researchers that children's music is a fruitful and worthy area of investigation.

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Appendix 1: Suggested characteristics of children's music and literature

	Shehan (1987) Orally transmitted songs	Barton Hopkin (1984) Jamaican playground songs	Clapp-Itnyre (2010) 19 th century hymns	Giuffre (2013) The Wiggles	McDowell (1999) Children's literature
Melody and harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall melodic range of fifth or sixth up to an octave. Melodic intervals of less than a third Based on pentatonic, tetratonic or tritonic scales Recurring melodic units such as mi-re-do, sol-do, do-lal-sol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall melodic range of fourth, fifth or sixth, rarely an octave Triadic and scale-wise motion is the norm Exclusively major key Monophonic (no harmony) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal harmonies Repetition 	
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently duple meter More rarely 3/4 or 6/8 Even rhythms Syncopated rhythms more likely in black/Hispanic/pop-influenced songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4/4 or 6/8 None in 3/4 Rhythmic regularity 			
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iterative (repeating) Cumulative (add a phrase per verse) Simple (AB, ABA) Strophic (same music for successive stanzas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular two bar phrases Strophic 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetition Standardised forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter than adult equivalents
Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal themes Travel or transport Nonsense People or social relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events of the game Purely a matter of aural effect Nonsense The selection of a mate/romantic/sexual concerns Responding to the adult world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watt's hymns - simple rhymes and meters Active verbs First-person Common meter: four lines of alternating eight syllables and six syllables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call and response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active rather than passive voices Favours dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection Child protagonists Clear-cut moral code Optimistic rather than pessimistic Child-oriented language
Sonic factors				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple production values Simplified arrangements Softened tones Clean sounds Energetic vocal delivery Clear vocal tones 	

Appendix 2: Children's Music Quotient (CMQ): For recordings

Song and artist:

		Attribute	✓	
Music	MELODY and HARMONY	Overall melodic range of between a fourth and an octave		out of 12 = %
		Scale-wise melodies		
		Melodic intervals of up to a sixth		
		Reliance on tonic, subdominant and dominant chords		
		Major key		
		No or minimal vocal harmonic backing		
		Perfect cadences		
	RHYTHM	Time signature of two four, three four or four four		
		Obvious and regular rhythms		
		High tempo (over 200 bpm for duple meter)		
	FORM	AB (Verse/chorus) or AAA form		
		Brevity (25% or more shorter than average hit of the year of release)		
Lyrics	TEXT / WORDS	Strong use of perfect or half rhyme throughout		out of 11 = %
		High levels of metric repetition		
		Short, discreet lyrical phrases		
		Animal/rural theme		
		Visual (as opposed to existential)		
		Domestic setting (home and family)		
		First-person narrator		
		Child protagonist/character		
		Obviously educational, didactic or moral intent		
		Nonsense/comedy theme		
		Majority of words have one or two syllables		
Sonics	TIMBRE	Child vocalist (or processed/speeded up adult vocal)		out of 6 = %
		Female vocalist		
		Clear diction / highly enunciated vocal delivery		
		Use of representational sound effects		
		High pitched tones (bells, glockenspiel, xylophone)		
		Foregrounding of vocals in the mix		

Music: ... out of 12. ... %

Lyrics: ... out of 11. ... %

Sonics: ... out of 6. ... %

Total quotient: ... out of 29. ... %

Appendix 3: Comparison of selected versions of Woody Guthrie's 'Riding in my Car (Car Song)'

Title and year	Artist	Tempo (bpm)	Length	No. of verses	Key	Comments/themes
<i>Riding in my car (Car song).</i> 1946	Woody Guthrie	130	1:52	13	E	Starts with child as first person ('Take me riding ..'), then to adult as first person. 'I'm gonna let you ...'. Many vocal sound effects. Speeds up in last two verses. Extends the meter on some of the IV chords.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 1961	Bob Dylan and David Van Ronk	117	2:31	13	G	Live version. Harmonised vocals. Extends the meter on some of the IV chords.
<i>Car Song.</i> 1961	Ramblin' Jack Elliott	120	1:55	12	F	Larger vocal range and more developed melodies than Guthrie.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 1962	Pete Seeger (Concert version)	115	1:00	6	E	'Let's go ...'. Only two different verses used.
<i>Car Song.</i> 1962	Melvyn T. Reiter	142	1:19	9	C	'Now we're going home again' – resolution. Many dramatic vocal sound effects. 'Brrrr' used as a chorus
<i>Riding in the car.</i> 1964	Wally Wyton	112	0:50	6	F#	Skiffle band with drums and instrumental sound effects
<i>Car Car (Riding in my car)</i> 1965	Donovan	106	1:33	8	G	Only hear the title verse once. 'Brrrr' appears also only once. Creates his own verse 'Tell you what I'll do ...'
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 1972	Pete Seeger (<i>Sesame Street</i> version)	120	1:30	8	F#	Apart from 'Brrrr' there are only two different verses. Guthrie's first verse is used as a chorus.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 1996	Bruce Springsteen	103	1:20	7	F	Concert version. The chord changes are not well defined. Sound effects from hitting the guitar.
<i>Car Car (Riding in my car)</i> 1992	Kids Songs	106	1:38	8	C	Half time drums. Female vocals. 'Lock your door and buckle up'. Synthesised backing. No 'Brrrr'.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 2009	Steve Waring	90	2:26	11	D	Adult-centred vocal intro. Notably slow version. Much 'Brrrr'. 'Trees and houses go the other way'. Other invented lyrics.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 2009	The Singing Kettle	106	3:09	14	G	Jazzy version with extra chords. Vocal instructions for actions throughout. Windscreen wipers, indicators. 'Going for a ride ...'. Many lyrical variations such as 'driving in my car'. Mix of male and female vocals.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 2010	Sugar Kane Music (50 Timeless Toddler Tunes)	100	2:01	10	C	Recorded/sampled sound effects. Female vocals. Vocal sound effect verse after each descriptive verse ('Beep, beep, beep, beep') etc.
<i>Riding in my car.</i> 2012	Elizabeth Mitchell	111	2:46	12	Bb	Laid back female vocals with child singer. Studio sound effects.

Average tempo of non-Guthrie versions = **112 bpm**

Average number of verses of non-Guthrie versions = **9.5**

Appendix 4: Musical analysis of well-known nursery rhymes

Song	Time Signature	Overall melodic range	Largest consecutive interval
Baa Baa Black Sheep	2/4	F to D = major 6 th	major 6 th
Eensy Weensy Spider	6/8	F to F = Octave	4 th
Frere Jacque	4/4	F to D = major 6 th	4 th
Humpty Dumpty	6/8	G to E = major 6 th	4 th
London Bridge is Falling Down	6/8	F to D = major 6 th	4 th
Here we go round the Mulberry Bush	6/8	C to C = Octave	major 3 rd
Old MacDonald	2/4	C to A = major 6 th	major 6 th
Rock-A-Bye Baby	3/4	B to G = minor 6 th	minor 6 th
Row Row Row Your Boat	2/4	C to C = Octave	4 th
Three Blind Mice	6/8	C to C = Octave	4 th
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star	2/4	C to A = major 6 th	5 th
		Average: 10 semi-tones. Minor seventh	6.5 semi-tones

Appendix 5: Musical analysis of the songs of Bagpuss

Song	Style/Genre	Time Signature	Overall melodic range	Largest consecutive interval
The Bony King of Nowhere	British folk	4/4	C – D = Octave + tone	major 6 th
Mouse Round – Here's a pin	English folk	2/4	A – C# = Octave + two tones	4 th
The Princess Suite	English folk	3/4	A – C# = Octave + two tones	4 th
Weaving song	English work song	6/8	A – D = Octave + 4 th	Minor 6 th
The Laird of Drumblair	Scottish folk	4/4	D – G = Octave + 4 th	-
Uncle Feedle	Celtic folk	6/8	A – A = Octave	Octave
Turtle Calypso	Calypso	4/4	A – C# = Octave + two tones	5 th
Brain O'Lynn	Irish folk	6/8	B – C# = Octave + 4 th	minor 7 th
Agricultural Jigs	English work song	Mixed	-	-
The Town band	Folk	3/4	D – D = Octave	5 th
The Miller's Song	English folk	4/4	C# – A = b6th	tritone
I saw a ship a-sailing	English folk (North East)	4/4	B – C = Octave + semi-tone	4 th
Song of the Flea	Irish folk	2/4	First Half D–D = Octave 2 nd half A-A = Octave	4 th Minor 3 rd
Mouse round – Mending song	English folk	2/4	A – C# = Octave + two tones	4 th
The Ear song	Folk (sea shanty)	4/4	C – D = Octave + tone	Octave
Hamish McTavish	Scottish bagpipes	-	-	-
The old woman tossed up in a basket	English folk (Dorset)	6/8	G – D = Octave + 5 th	Octave
Haste to the wedding	Irish folk	6/8	G – D = Octave + 5 th	Octave
The Porcupine song	English folk	4/4	G – C = Octave + 4th	tritone
The Oak Tree Reel	Irish folk (Donegal)	-	-	-
Row Row Row your boat	Nursery Rhyme	4/4	A – D = Octave + 4th	4 th
			Average: Octave + major third	7.7 semi-tones

Appendix 6: Children's Choice playlist analysis

Characteristic features	Intergenerational Integration Eclectic mix of 'family' music				'Golden Age' Popularity of George Martin productions			Youth Culture Rise of Top 40 songs		Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart Canonised playlists				Tony Blackburn Top 40. Magazine style show	
Year	'53	'54	'56	'58	'60	'61	'62	'63	'66	'68	'73	'77	'78	'82	'83
Number of playlists analysed	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	1	3	4	1	1	2
Intentionally for children	14	13	2	12	15	4	2	16	6	2	7	17	6	-	4
Manipulated/novelty vocal	3	-	2	2	3	2	-	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Disney	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Animal theme	13	5	6	8	12	10	5	8	7	4	2	6	4	-	4
Child singer/s	9	3	-	1	1	4	-	2	4	-	7	4	2	-	-
Comedy/Novelty	2	-	4	3	8	5	3	9	8	2	6	5	1	-	2
Classical/Military	6	6	8	7	10	13	5	9	3	-	1	1	-	-	-
Music hall/Operetta	3	3	2	2	5	5	3	7	4	2	3	3	2	-	-
From a Musical	1	1	1	4	6	4	3	7	6	2	2	5	2	-	1
Film/TV Theme	3	-	6	5	5	3	7	4	4	-	3	3	3	1	1
Contemporary Pop	3	-	11	6	16	16	8	25	19	14	47	32	12	20	37
Light Pop/Easy Listening	4	-	10	3	13	11	6	19	7	6	26	23	9	2	5
Cowboy/Country	3	2	5	4	21	7	12	3	3	-	2	2	-	-	-
Folk incl. Scottish	2	2	1	1	4	6	3	6	3	1	1	1	2	-	-
World Music	1	2	-	-	3	3	6	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	1
Retro and Pastiche	1	2	2	3	4	3	6	5	3	1	17	28	6	2	9
Christmas	4	1	1	3	5	3	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Hymns	1	2	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Jazz	2	-	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Unknown	1	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

The playlists were gathered from the 'Programme as Broadcast' ('PasB') notes stored at the BBC's Written Archive Centre in Caversham, U.K.

Forty-two playlists were selected with an average of twenty-five to thirty songs per programme (around 1200 songs in total). Similar months for each calendar year were generally chosen (usually February and March) to counter seasonal tendencies (an over-representation of Christmas or summer songs, for example).

Appendix 7: Recordings with most appearances on Children's Choice-themed compilations released and broadcast between 1990 and 2013

Incidence	Song	Artist	Year	Record Label	Further information
14	Nellie the elephant	Mandy Miller	1956	Parlophone	Twelve-year-old vocalist. George Martin production
13	The laughing policeman	Charles Penrose	1922	Regal	Rereleased in 1926 on Columbia. Tune originals from the 1890s
12	The runaway train	Vernon Dalhart	1925	Victor	Rereleased in 1931 on Edison Records
12	I taut I taw a puddy tat	Mel Blanc	1950	Capitol	
11	Teddy bear's picnic	Henry Hall	1932	EMI	
9	Buckingham Palace	Anne Stephens	1941	HMV	Ten year-old vocalist
9	In the middle of the house	Alma Cogan	1956	HMV	
9	Big Rock candy mountain	Burl Ives	1945	Decca	
9	Sparky's magic piano	Henry Blair feat. Ray Turner	1948	Capitol	
9	Right said Fred	Bernard Cribbins	1962	Parlophone	George Martin production
8	Ernie	Bennie Hill	1971	Columbia	
8	Puff the magic dragon	Peter, Paul & Mary	1963	Warner Bros	
8	The ugly duckling	Danny Kaye	1952	RKO	
8	I know an old lady	Burl Ives	1953	Brunswick	
8	Little boy fishing	Shirley Abicair	1957	Parlophone	George Martin production
8	Gilly Gilly Ossenfeffer	Max Bygraves	1954	HMV	
7	Me and my Teddy Bear	Rosemary Clooney	1950	Columbia	
7	Grandad	Clive Dunn	1970	Columbia	
6	Captain Beaky and his band	Keith Michell	1980	Polydor	
6	The Hippopotamus Song	Flanders and Swann	1961	Parlophone	George Martin production
6	Windmill in Old Amsterdam	Ronnie Hilton	1965	HMV	
6	My brother	Terry Scott	1962	Parlophone	George Martin production
6	Robin Hood	Dick James	1956	Parlophone	George Martin production
6	Woody woodpecker	Mel Blanc	1948	Capitol	
5	Three wheel on my wagon	New Christy Minstrels	1965	Columbia	
5	Two little boys	Rolf Harris	1969	Columbia	
5	Morningtown ride	The Seekers	1966	Capitol	
5	Pickin' a chicken	Eve Boswell	1955	Capitol	

4	Ragtime Cowboy Joe	David Seville and The Chipmunks	1959	London	
4	Don't jump off the roof Dad	Tommy Cooper	1961	Palette	
4	Run rabbit run	Flanagan and Allen	1939	Decca	
4	Whose afraid of the big bad wolf?	-	1933	Disney	From Disney's <i>Three Little Pigs</i>
4	The owl and the pussycat	Elton Hayes	1953	Parlophone	George Martin production
4	Boom OO Yata Ta ta	Morcambe and Wise	1962	Parlophone	George Martin production
4	Jake the Peg	Rolf Harris	1966	Columbia	
4	The fallad of Davy Crocket	Fess Parker	1955	Columbia	
4	My Grandfather's flock	The Radio Revellers	1940	Peter Pan	Written in 1876
4	(How much is) that doggie in the window?	Lita Rosa	1953	Decca	Also recorded in 1953 by Mandy Miller (aged nine) and Ann Stephens (also nine).
4	My boomerang	Charlie Drake	1961	Parlophone	George Martin production
4	You're a pink tooth brush	Max Bygraves	1955	HMV	
4	The Bee Song	Arthur Askey	1938	HMV	
4	Bimbo	Jim Reeves	1957	RCA	
4	Kitty in the basket	Jimmy Boyd & Gayla Peevey	1954	Columbia	
4	On the good ship lollipop	Shirley Temple	1934	Fox Film	Six-year-old vocalist. Song taken from film <i>Bright Eyes</i>
4	All things bright and beautiful	Uncle Mac	1953	BBC session	
4	Three fittle fishes	Frankie Howerd	1949	Harmony	
4	Four legged Friend	Roy Rogers	1952	HMV	
			Average year 1953.4		

Appendix 8: Thematic analysis of top ten ten most-selected songs from Children's Choice themed-compilations

			Themes and attributes					CMQ Scores (%)			
Song	Number of Appearances	Year of release	Child vocals	Animal	Music hall	Cowboy	Intentional children's recording	Music	Lyrics	Sonics	Total
Nellie the elephant	14	1956	X	X	X	-	X	83	55	83	72
The laughing policeman	13	1922	-	-	X	-	-	100	55	50	72
The runaway train	12	1925	-	-	-	X	X	100	36	33	59
I taut I taw a puddy tat	12	1950	-	X	-	-	X	92	91	50	83
Teddy bear's picnic	11	1932	-	X	X	-	X	58	64	50	59
Buckingham palace	9	1941	X	-	-	-	X	92	55	100	79
In the middle of the house	9	1956	-	-	-	X	-	100	73	83	86
Big rock candy mountain	9	1945	-	-	-	X	X	92	55	33	66
Sparky's magic piano	9	1948	-	-	-	-	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Right said Fred	9	1962	-	-	X	-	-	92	45	33	62
	Average	1943.7						89.9	58.8	57.2	70.8

Appendix 9: The Muppet Show songs - Series One

Episode	Song	Date of publishing	Genre/comments Most references from MuppetWiki, 2016
101	Mahna Mahna	1968	Originally titled "Mah-Na Mah-Na," was written for an Italian documentary about life in Sweden, titled 'Svezia, Inferno e Paradiso' (Sweden, Heaven and Hell).
	Flight of the Bumblebee	1899	
	Solace	1909	A Mexican Serenade" is a piano composition by Scott Joplin and the only one of his pieces to integrate tango rhythms with his trademark ragtime.
	UK spot: You and I and George	1959	A romance between "you and I". The song ends with George drowning in a river, "leaving you alone with me."
	Cowboy time	-	
	Simon Smith and his Amazing	1967	
	Temptation	1933	First performed by Bing Crosby in the film Going Hollywood. It was later recorded on multiple occasions by Perry Como, whose renditions landed on the pop charts in both 1945 and 1974.
102	Lydia the Tattooed Lady	1939	Novelty song Marx Brothers film <i>At the Circus</i> , in which it was performed by Groucho Marx.
	Teenager in Love	1959	
	UK spot: Ain't Misbehavin	1929	Musical <i>Connie's Hot Chocolates</i> , and Thomas "Fats" Waller for the 1943 film <i>Stormy Weather</i> .
	Sax and Violence	-	
	1812 Overture	1880	
	Some Enchanted Evening	1949	
103	Comedy Tonight	1966	Opening number from the Sondheim musical <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i>
	Willkommen	1966	<i>Cabaret</i>
	Pachalafaka	1958	From <i>Terrribly Sophisticated Songs</i> (album)
	Stormy Weather	1933	A blues song that uses bad weather as a metaphor for loneliness. Although the song was originally written with Cab Calloway in mind, it was first performed by Ethel Waters at the 1933 Cotton Club Parade and has since been sung by the likes of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and Lena Horne
	Razzle Dazzle	1975	Chicago
104	Sunny	-	
	Row Row Row	1912	<i>Ziegfeld Folies Of 1912</i>
	Can't Take My Eyes Off of You	1967	
	UK spot: I Never Harmed an Onion	1925	Full of puns such as "Once I saw a salad dressing", "I've also whipped cream and beaten an egg", and the titular "I've never harmed an onion, so why do they make me cry?"
	You Can't Rollerskate in a Buffalo Herd"	1964	
105	I get ideas	1951	Tango set to the melody of Sanders' Spanish language song 'Adios, Muchachos'.
	UK spot: To Morrow	1957	Popularised by Kingston Trio. You should have gone to Morrow yesterday and back today, for the train that goes to Morrow is a mile upon its way."
	Lady of Spain	1931	
	Goody Goody	1936	Wayne and Wanda sing
	Fever	1956	Otis Blackwell wrote "Fever" with Eddie Cooley under the pseudonym, John Davenport.
106	Money	1962	Comedy
	Gone with the wind	1937	#1 hit for Horace Heidt in 1937,
	UK spot: Dog Eat Dog	-	
	Thank God I'm a Country Boy	1974	Hit for John Denver
107	Elusive Butterfly		
	UK spot: Cottleston Pie	1926	Rowlf introduces A. A. Milne's poem

	Happy Together	1967	Originally by The Turtles
108	All of me	1931	Originally introduced in 1931 by Belle Baker. Recorded four times by Frank Sinatra
	An Old Fashioned Love Song	1971	Three Dog Night, rock/easy listening
	UK spot: I'm in Love with a Big Blue Frog	1967	Peter, Paul, and Mary. Novelty.
	You Do Something to Me	1929	Wayne and Wanda. From Cole Porter's musical <i>Fifty Million Frenchmen</i>
	Sad Song	1974	
109	I Feel Pretty	1957	<i>West Side Story</i> . An unironic song about how being loved can make a person feel more beautiful.
	The Old Fashioned Way	-	Originally by Charles Aznavour
	UK Spot: Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight?	1924	
	Inchworm	1951	By Hans Christen Andersen
110	Love Ya to Death	1976	
	UK spot: The Electric Mayhem plays "Sweet Tooth Jam."	1976	
	I Get a Kick Out of You	1934	Wayne and Wanda perform
	Halfway Down the Stairs	1926	
111	Rag Mop	1950	#1 hit for the Ames Brothers
	I got a name	1973	Sung by Jim Croce
	UK spot: Theme from <i>Love Story</i>	1970	
	I'm glad there is you	1941	Jazz standard
	Sing	1971	
112	UK Spot: "(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song	1975	#1 hit by B. J. Thomas
	You Do Something to Me	1929	Prev in 108
	Autumn Leaves	1945	From film <i>Les Portes de la Nuit</i> . Sung by Wayne and Wanda
	Bein' Green	1970	'A frog's poignant realization of his own dignity and worth'
113	In a little Spanish Town	1927	
	All I need is the girl	1959	Musical <i>Gypsy</i> . The song is about a young man's need for a dancing partner.
	UK spot: I'm My Own Grandpaw	1948	
	Trees (Wayne and Wanda)	1922	1913 (poem)
	Side by Side	1927	Popular standard
	Let There be love	1940	Nat King Cole
114	A nice girl like me	1975	Acting drunk in bar, rows of drinks
	UK spot: Nobody	1906	Bert Williams, Music Hall, loneliness, isolation
	Never smile at a crocodile	1952	From <i>Peter Pan</i> - Disney
	Try to remember	1960	From <i>The Fantastiks</i> (musical)
115	What now my love	-	
	Put another log on the fire	1974	Destroys the room due to male chauvinism. Satirical/ironic. Fem symbol on t-shirt, jeans, shoots door down
	UK spot: It's not where you start	1973	From <i>Seesaw</i> , musical
	Look at that face	1965	<i>The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd</i> (musical)
	Friends	1969	'And I am all alone, there is no-one here to guide me. You've got to have friends'. Bette Midler's theme song
116	Tenderly	-	
	UK spot: May you always	1959	Originally popularised by the McGuire Sisters in 1958.
	Some enchanted evening	1949	2 nd appearance

	Make a song	-	
117	Jump shout boogie	1976	
	Mr Cellophane	1975	From <i>Chicago</i> Musical
	Pure imagination	1969	From <i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> musical film
118	Mississippi Mud	1927	
	UK spot: Lazy Bones	1933	Tin pan alley
	Hugga Wugga	1971	Jazzy, funky, soulful
	You Are My Sunshine	1931	Novelty version
	The Entertainer	1902	
119	Under My Skin	1936	Musical
	Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered	1940	Musical
	UK spot: I'm Looking Through You	1965	
	You've Got a Friend	1971	
120	Broadway Baby	1971	<i>Follies</i> Musical
	UK spot: Tit Willow	1885	<i>The Mikado</i>
	Searchin'	1957	
	On a Clear Day (You Can See Forever)"	1965	<i>On a Clear Day You Can See Forever</i>
	"Nobody Does It Like Me	1973	<i>Seesaw</i> (musical)
121	"Dance	1976	
	In My Life	1965	
	UK Spot: Minuet in G Major	1725	
	Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow!	1945	
	Ain't Nobody's Business But My Own	1950	Ernie Ford & Kay Starr duet. Hillbilly
122	There's No Business Like Show Business	1946	Ethel Merman was a Broadway Star
	UK Spot: Don't sugar me	1956	A comedic version of a torch song. Uses tea metaphors for romance: "Don't stir me, boy, or try to spoon."
	You're the Top	1934	<i>Anything Goes</i> Musical
	Friendship	1939	<i>DuBarry Was a Lady</i> (musical)
	De Lovely	1936	<i>Red, hot and blue</i> musical
	Together Wherever We Go	1959	Gypsy
	You're Just in Love	1950	<i>Call Me Madam</i> (musical)
	Anything You Can Do	1946	<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> (musical)
	Mutual Admiration Society	1956	<i>Happy Hunting</i> (musical)
123	In the summertime	1960	Country song. Kaye Ballard was a comic actress, on Broadway
	Oh babe what would you say	1973	Music hall-esque
	Life Gets Teejus Don't It	1947	Old age theme
	One note samba	1962	
124	Mr Bassman	1963	
	The Blue Danube	1867	Johann Strauss II
	UK Spot: When I'm Not Near the Fish I Love	1947	<i>Finian's Rainbow</i> (musical)
	It's only a paper moon	1932	<i>The Great Magoo</i> (play)

Twenty-four episodes in Series One. 16 songs. Average year of publishing: **1946**

Appendix 10: The Muppet Show songs - Series Five

Episode	Song	Date	Genre/comments
			Most references from MuppetWiki, 2016
501	S'Wonderful	1927	Funny Face
	You Were Meant for Me	1929	<i>The Broadway Melody</i>
	For Me and My Gal	1917	Vaudeville
	Singin' in the Rain	1929	Hollywood Revue of 1929
	Jambalaya	1952	Country
	Frere Jacques	Trad	World
	The worry song	1945	In <i>Anchors Aweigh</i> with Jerry Mouse
	UK spot: Fit as a fiddle	1952	<i>Singing in the Rain</i> musical
	You wonderful you	1950	<i>Summer Stock</i> musical with Judy Garland
	Cool water	1941	Country
502	Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens	1946	Rhythm and Blues
	I Feel the Earth Move	1971	Pop
	Some of These Days.	1910	Jazz
	Side by Side by Side	1970	<i>Company</i> musical
	What Would We Do Without You	1970	<i>Company</i> musical
503	Man Smart, Critter Smarter	1980	Pop. Ecological theme.
	Honest Lullaby	1979	Folk. Virginity!
	UK Spot: "Blackbird"	1968	Folk
	The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down	1969	Country
	Will the Circle Be Unbroken	1907	Folk/Gospel
504	Barnyard Boogie	1948	Rhythm and Blues
	Fire Down Below	1957	Musical/Pop
	Isn't This a Lovely Day	1935	Top Hat musical -
	UK Spot: After You've Gone	1918	Jazz
	Pennies From Heaven	1936	Jazz
	Liebesträume	1850	Classical
	Goldfinger	1964	Musical
505	Temptation	1933	Jazz
	(They Long to Be) Close to You	1970	Pop/Ballad
	Alexander's Ragtime Band	1911	Jazz/Ragtime
	The Varsity Drag	1927	Jazz/Ragtime
	UK Spot: Bird Walk	1976	Instr/Pop
	Japanese Square Dance	1980	World
506	UK Spot: When You're Smiling	1928	Jazz
	UK Spot: Put on a Happy Face	1960	Pop
	UK Spot: Smiles	1917	Pop
	UK Spot: My Mammy	1918	Jazz
	UK Spot: Happy Days Are Here Again	1929	Musical. <i>Chasing Rainbows</i> movie
	Falling song	1980	Musical. Alice in Wonderland
	These are the yolks folks	1980	
	Jabberwocky	1871	Nonsense/Novelty
	We're off to see the wizard	1939	Musical
507	Rule, Britannia!	1740	Classical
	Sailing, Sailing	1880	Music Hall
	Anchors Aweigh	1906	Musical/nautical
	El Rancho Grande	Trad	Mexican

	Dead Man's Chest	1883	Folk/nautical
	Workin' at the Car Wash Blues	1973	Pop
	Tie-Aye-Aye the Man Down	Trad	Folk/nautical
	The Walloping Window Blind	1885	Folk/nautical/poem
	Carolina in the Morning	1922	"The Passing Show of 1922" musical
508	Puppet Man	1970	The 5th Dimension and Tom Jones
	These Boots Are Made for Walkin'	1966	Pop
	The Teddy Bears' Picnic" (instr.)	1907	Music Hall
509	For Me and My Goyle	1917	Music Hall
	One Way or Another	1978	Pop/punk
	UK Spot: "Forgiven	1927	Poem/
	Rainbow Connection	1979	Ballad
	Call Me	1980	Pop/punk
510	Rockin' Robin	1958	Rhythm and Blues
	Lo! Hear the Gentle Lark	-	Classical
	UK spot: La Seine	-	Classical
	The Little Shepherd	1908	Classical
	Ease on down the road	1975	Pop/soul
511	Scarborough Fair	trad	Folk
	Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover	1975	Pop
	Long Long Day	1980	Pop
	El Condor Pasa	1913	World
	Baby Driver	1969	Pop
	Loves Me Like a Rock	1975	Pop
512	Tumbling Tumbleweeds	1934	Country
	Don't Cry Out Loud	1977	Ballad
	Oh! Susanna	1848	Country
	UK spot: Once in Love With Amy	1948	Musical
	Whenever I Call You Friend	1979	Pop, duet with Floyd
	How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?	1952	Music Hall
	Your Cheatin' Heart	1952	Country
513	Yakkety Yak	1958	Rock'n'roll
	Boccherini's Minuet in A Major	1771	Classical
	Ti-Pi-Tin	1938	Swing/pop
	UK spot: Lovely Bunch of Coconuts	1944	Music Hall
	Poison Ivy	1959	Rock'n'roll
514	Another Opening, Another Show	1948	<i>Kiss Me Kate</i> (musical)
	Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me	1972	Pop/Country
	It's Hard to Be Humble	1980	Country
	UK spot: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	1716	Classical
	Poor Boy Boogie	1972	Rock'n'roll
	I Believe in Music	1971	Pop
515	Watch What Happens	1964	Ballad
	UK spot: Poke Me Polka	1980	World
	But Not for Me.	1930	Orig. sung by Ginger Rogers. In <i>Girl Crazy</i>
	I Was Made for Dancin'	1978	Disco
516	Night and Day	1932	<i>Gay Divorce</i> (play) – Musical
	Friendship Train	1969	Soul/Gospel
	UK spot: Alley Oop	1960	Rhythm and blues
	God Bless the Child	1939	Jazz

	I Heard It Through the Grapevine	1967	Soul
517	Happy Holidays	1942	<i>Holiday Inn</i> Musical
	Who Put the Bomp (in the Bomp, Bomp, Bomp)	1961	Rock'n'roll
	Drinking Song	1924	Musical
	Yankee Doodle Boy	1904	Vaudeville/Musical
	Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da	1968	Pop/ska
	Jingle Bells	1857	Pop/Festive
	Land of the Free	-	Classical
	If I Ruled the World	1965	<i>Pickwick</i> Musical
	Just an Old Fashioned Girl	1956	Pop
	Sleigh Ride	1946	Pop/Festive
	This Land Is Your Land	1944	Folk
	When the Saints Go Marching In	1927	Jazz
	Winter Wonderland	1934	Pop/Festive
	Yankee Doodle Boy	1904	Musical
	Stars and Stripes	1897	Classical
518	Surfin USA	1963	Rock'n'roll
	In a Persian Market	1920	World/Classical
	UK spot: Girlfriend of the Whirling Dervish	1938	World
	The Laughing Policeman	1922	Music Hall
	Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight	1886	Jazz
519	Friendship	1939	<i>DuBarry Was a Lady</i>
	UK spot: Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner	1947	Music Hall/Cockney
	The Gnu	1957	Music Hall/Operetta
	Hawaiian Cowboy	1933	World/Country
520	Just squeeze me	1941	Jazz
	UK spot: Danny Boy	1913	Folk
	The Ying Tong Song	1956	Nonsense/Music Hall
	Pecos Bill	1948	<i>Melody Time</i> (film) Musical
521	The Martins and the Coys	1936	Country
	Riders in the Sky	1948	Country
	UK spot: Goodnight Sardine/Goodnight Irene	1908	Folk
	Dirty Old Egg Sucking Dog	1967	Country
	Orange Blossom Special	1939	Country
	Jackson	1967	Country
522	Good Day Sunshine	1966	Pop
	Dancing in the Dark	1931	<i>The Band Wagon</i> (musical revue)
	You Mustn't Feel Discouraged	1964	<i>Fade Out, Fade In</i> (musical)
	UK spot: A Transport of Delight	1956	Music Hall/Operetta
523	Blue Bayou	1963	Pop/Ballad
	The Cat Came Back	Trad	Children's/folk/minstrel
	I've Got a Crush on You	1928	Jazz/Ballad
	UK spot: I'm So Happy	1980	Ghosts singing. Pop.
	It's in His Kiss (The Shoop-Shoop Song)	1964	Soul/R&B
	When I Grow Too Old to Dream	1935	<i>The Night Is Young</i> (film) Musical
524	In the navy	1979	Disco/Pop
	On a Slow Boat to China	1949	<i>Neptune's Daughter</i> (film) Musical
	You Light Up My Life	1973	Ballad/Pop
	UK spot: How High the Moon	1951	Jazz
	Talk to the Animals	1967	Musical

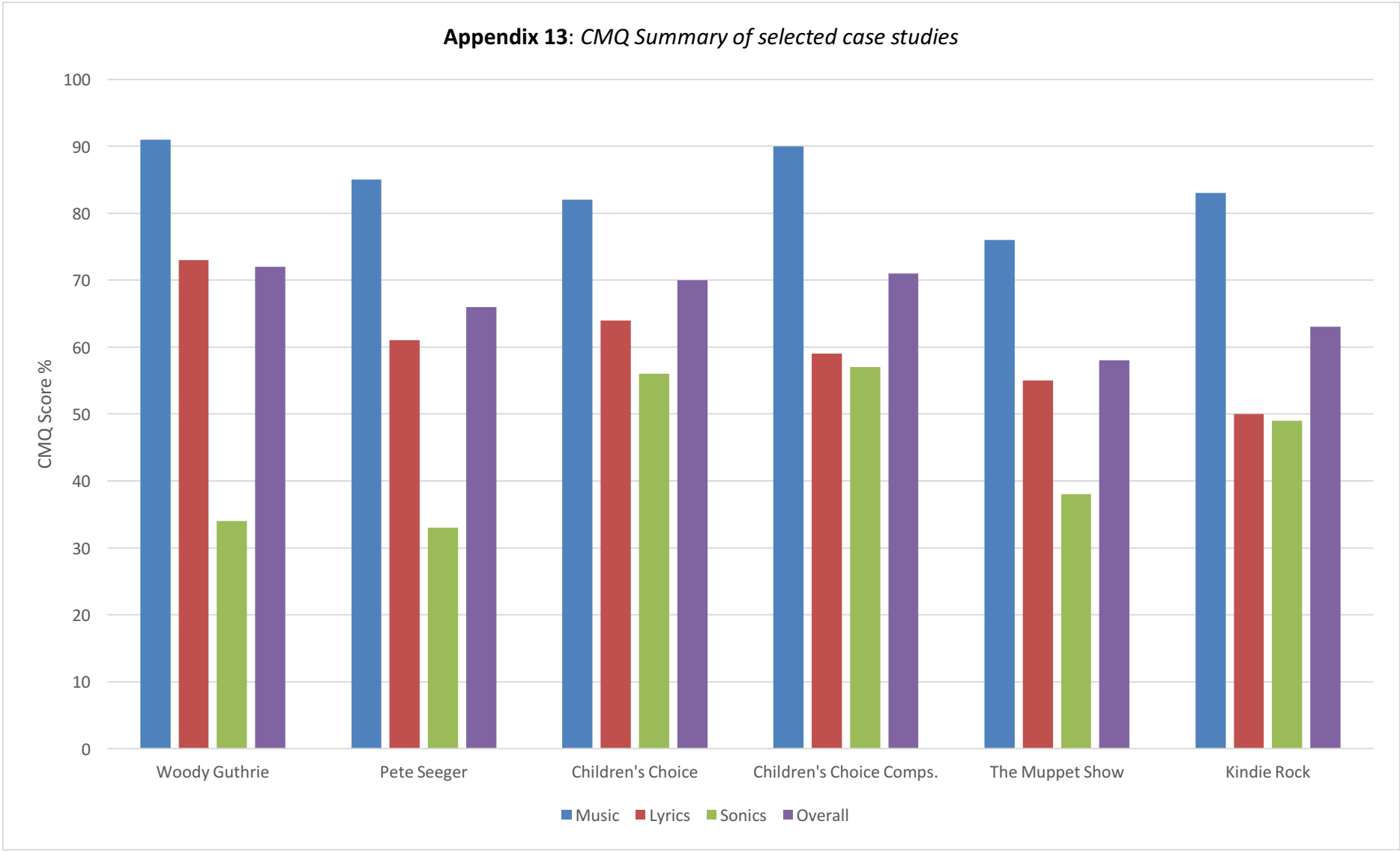
Twenty-four episodes in Series Five. 146 songs. Average year of publishing: **1939**

Appendix 11: Music hall songs on The Muppet Show

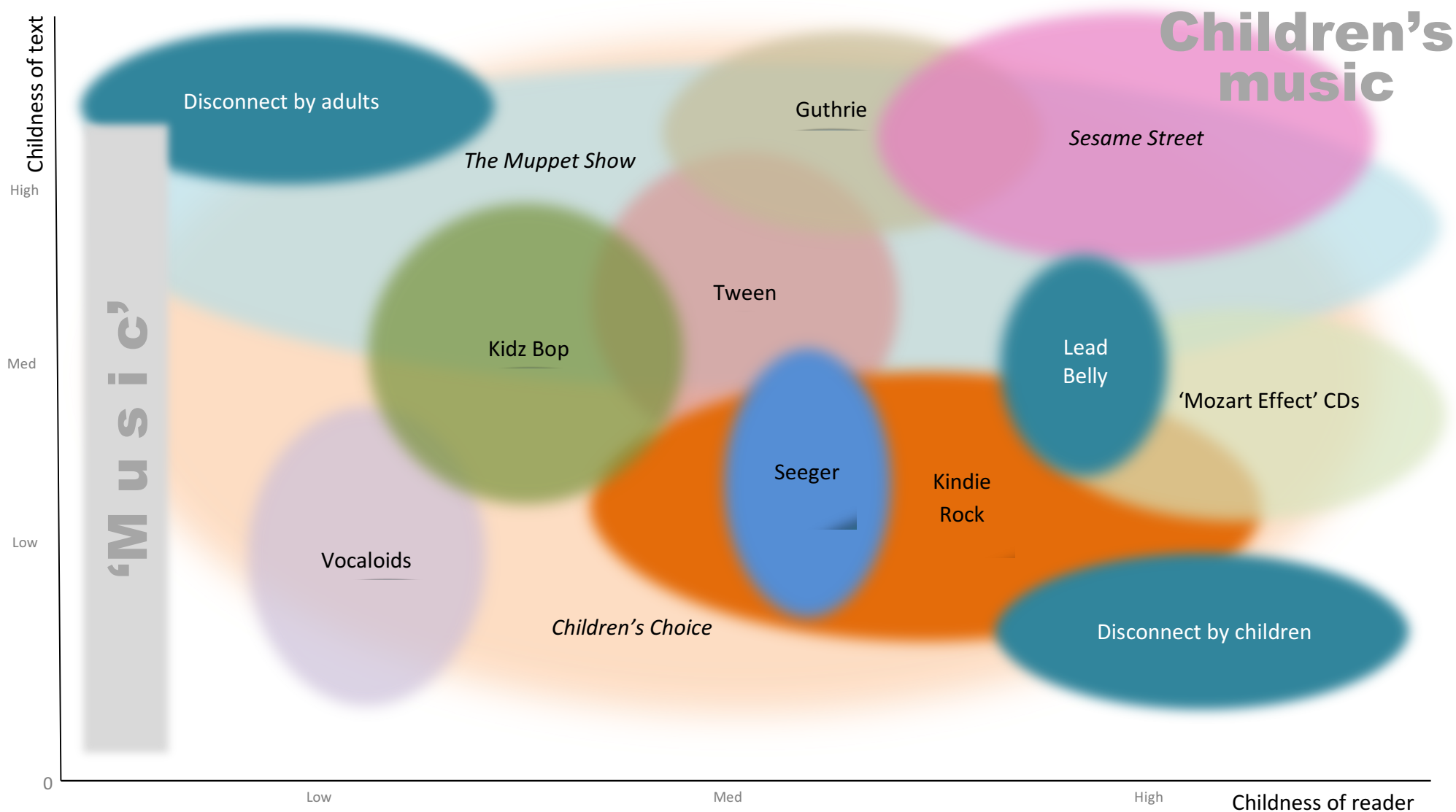
Song	Episode	Date of publishing	Comments
Any Old Iron	214	-	
Knees Up Mother Brown	410	1918	
Burlington Bertie from Bow	201	1900	Vesta Tilley later Ella Shieild 1915
Wotcher Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road	210	1891	Albert Chevalier 'the singing costermonger'. Sudden wealth.
Down at the Old Bull and Bush	321	-	Drinking song
Danny Boy	520	-	
Auld Lang Syne	502	-	
Does your chewing gum lose its flavor on the bedpost overnight?	109	1924	American origin
The Boy in the Gallery	204	1885	Nelly Power later Marie Lloyd. Song set in a Music Hall
My Old Dutch	206	1892	Originally sung by Albert Chevalier
Show Me a Rose	207		Originally sung by Groucho Marx
Henrietta's Wedding	211	1939	South African folk song
Mad Dogs and Englishmen	216	1931	Originally sung by Noel Coward
English Country Garden	218	-	Written by Percy Grainger ('Country gardens' 1918). Popularised by Jimmie Rogers 1962
Medley: Long Long Ago / Aura Lee / If All Those Endearing Young Charms / Believe Me / Oh Genevieve	221	-	
Waiting at the Church	223	1908	Originally sung by Vesta Victoria
A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go	301	18 th C	
She Was One of the Early Birds	302	1895	Original music hall song 'Dickie Birds' 1895
The Bird on Nellie's Hat	304	1906	Popularised by Helen Trix
Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow	306	1892	Originally sung by Vesta Victoria
I Want to Sing in Opera	309	1911	Music Hall star sings Class diffs
Run Rabbit Run	421	1939	Originally by Flanagan and Allen. An anti-German song with a nursery rhyme melody
Fit as a Fiddle	501	-	Originally sung by Gene Kelly in <i>Singing in the Rain</i>
I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts	513	1944	
A Transport of Delight	522	-	Originally by Flanders and Swann

Appendix 12: Kindie Rock song analysis

Artist	Song	Music	CMQ	Sonics	CMQ	Lyrical themes	CMQ	Overall
Dan Zanes	Hello Hello	I, IV, V chords. Repetitive. 90 bpm	83%	Folk/country.	66%	Saying 'hello' to friends, animals, the world	45%	66%
The Aquabats	Super Rad	90/180 bpm. Dominant seventh and unusual chords	83%	Ska-punk. Gang vocals on choruses	17%	Limited rhyme. Strong repetition	27%	48%
The Not Its!	Haircut	Minor pentatonic chords and melody	75%	New wave. Pop punk.	50%	Not wanting a haircut	45%	59%
Caspar Babypants	The stump hotel	Minor pentatonic chords and melody	58%	Acoustic plus surf guitar	50%	Bugs in a hotel	55%	55%
Music for Aardvarks	Taxi	220 bpm. 35 secs long. Complete repetition of verse.	100%	Guthrie-esque folk.	50%	Getting a taxi	45%	69%
They Might be Giants	I am a palaeontologist	224 bpm. Repetition. Classic song structure	92%	Motown-beat indie punk	50%	Dinosaur theme	64%	72%
Saint Etienne	Let's build a zoo	Minor pentatonic chords and melody	83%	Dominant percussion and vocals. Indie-dance.	33%	Zoo and animals	55%	62%
Belle and Sebastian	The monkeys are breaking out of the zoo	Minor key 80 bpm verses. Major key 160 bpm choruses.	92%	High pitched, novelty instruments and sound effects	75%	Monkeys escaping and playing	64%	76%
Average			83%	Average	49%	Average	50%	63%



Appendix 14: Representation of childness in case study texts and implied readers



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